

# Step'annos Orbelean's

## *History of the State of Sisakan*

Translated from Classical Armenian  
by Robert Bedrosian

*To the memory of my grandmother Aghavni Postoian Torigian*

Sources of the Armenian Tradition (Long Branch, N.J., 2012-2015)

This translation is in the public domain. It may be copied and distributed freely.

Download in various formats from Internet Archive:  
[Step'annos Orbelean's History of the State of Sisakan](#)

[Translator's Preface](#)  
[A Note on Pagination](#)  
[Additional Resources](#)

---

## Volume 1

### [Chapter 1.](#)

Introduction to our book and some particulars about it.

### [Chapter 2.](#)

Genealogy and antiquity. Whence sprang the patriarchs of the line of Sisak, from Adam onward.

### [Chapter 3.](#)

Borders of the land of Siwnik', its fertility and usefulness for mankind, the number of its districts and impregnable fortresses.

### [Chapter 4.](#)

The early history of the clan of Sisak. How it was established by Vagharshak, king of the Armenians.

### [Chapter 5.](#)

The illumination of the land of Siwnik' with the knowledge of Christ God, the conversion of the princes under Trdat by Saint Gregory, our Illuminator; destruction of the pagan temples, construction of churches, ordination of a bishop of Siwnik' and other worthwhile stories.

## [Chapter 6.](#)

Accounts from ancient times about the arrival of the blessed Apostle Bartholomew to the land of Siwnik' and about the construction of a church in the district of Goght'n, the conversion to the faith of some [folk], establishment of an altar and ordination of a bishop.

## [Chapter 7.](#)

Regarding the bishops and princes of the Armenians: who among them were senior and leaders as designated by the great [King] Trdat and Saint Gregory and their sons and grandsons; and regarding the distinct honor and station accorded to the bishop of Siwnik'.

## [Chapter 8.](#)

The death of Gregory, metropolitan of Siwnik', and how the blessed Mashtots' occupied the throne after him.

## [Chapter 9.](#)

Prince Andok Siwnik' and his deeds; what befell the land of Siwnik' from Shapuh, king of the Persians. How [Andok] went to the great Theodorus, emperor of Byzantium, where he died. This according to the blessed Petros, bishop of Siwnik.

## [Chapter 10.](#)

Babik comes to Shapuh from Byzantium; the bravery he displays; he again rules his own patrimonial land of Siwnk' and restores it. He becomes equal in status to the Bagratids during his rule. This is taken from the same homily of Lord Petros. These events transpired in the 68th year of the reign of the Persian king Shapuh, son of Ormizd.

---

## [Chapter 11.](#)

Revelation of the church at Shaghat and the discovery of such holiness within it; the conversion [to Christianity] of Gor, Gazan, and other Persians; the miracles of the priest Tirot.

## [Chapter 12.](#)

[Information] from the same homily of Lord Petros. The discovery of relics of the saints in the church of Shaghat after a long time; quarrels during the time of Bishop Yovakim; seniority among the villages and lordly house-holders (*tanuterk'*); who was ranked highest and held primacy.

## [Chapter 13.](#)

The princes who ruled after Babik.

## [Chapter 14.](#)

Listing of the princes from Babik to K'urd.

## [Chapter 15.](#)

The coming of the blessed *vardapet* Mesrob to Siwnik' and Goght'n, his travels around the districts, and his purging of idol-worship which had been concealed here and there. [This was done] with the assistance of Prince Vaghinak and Shabit'.

---

## [Chapter 16.](#)

Restoration of the episcopate of Siwnik' under Lord Anania; his travels to Aghuania, and his honoring by their king, Esvaghe'n.

## [Chapter 17.](#)

The cowardly and wicked prince Vasak of Siwnik' and the cause of his destruction.

## [Chapter 18.](#)

The martyrdom of the glorious and venerable *sepuh* of Siwnik', [Y]azd, at the hands of Mihran during a Persian [military] review.

## [Chapter 19.](#)

The martyrdoms which occurred here and there in the district of Vayots' dzor and the martyrium that was built between the rivers Eghegik' and Mozan, near the hill where the fortress was.

## [Chapter 20.](#)

The bishops of Siwnik' who succeeded Anania, and about the miraculous ordination of Lord Erits'ak.

---

## [Chapter 21.](#)

Brief account about Father Giwt and K'ristosase'r; and the construction of a monastery on the banks of the Arax [River].

## [Chapter 22.](#)

Concerning the Bishops of Siwnik' Makar and Petros, Gigan and Vrtane's.

## [Chapter 23.](#)

The letter written by Lord Yovhanne's, *kat'oghikos* of the Armenians, and other bishops to Lord Vrdane's, bishop of Siwnik'.

## [Chapter 24.](#)

Concerning the day on which the Armenian Era was established; and about when the [doctrinal formulation] "Who Was crucified" was introduced.

## [Chapter 25.](#)

The death of Vrdane's and the succession of Grigor and K'ristap'or; and what stories there were from their days.

---

## [Chapter 26.](#)

Regarding the unity of the Armenians and the sole rule of Lord Abraham; about the great assembly which took place in Dvin, and about the nine classes [of clergy] in the Church and about the separation of the Iberians/Georgians. [In this chapter are] many useful accounts which we collected from old letters and from the writings of Uxt'ane's [including narrations] about the archbishopric of the Aghuans, the metropolitanate of Siwnik', and how it came about that the Cross of Siwnik' was bestowed.

## [Chapter 27.](#)

Regarding the nine orders of the clergy, what they are and what duties they perform.

## [Chapter 28.](#)

Concerning Mat'usagha, bishop of Siwnik', and about the assembly at Karin [convened during the time] of Heraclius; and about Ezr, who was steeped in the Chalcedonian heresy.

## [Chapter 29.](#) Translation omitted.

The letter of Mat'usaghay, bishop of Siwnik', which was written to Emperor Heraclius about the faith, at the order of Lord Ezr, *kat'oghikos* of the Armenians and other Armenian bishops.

## [Chapter 30.](#)

The bishops of Siwnik' who succeeded Lord Mat'usaghay the *k'ert'ogh*.

---

## [Chapter 31.](#)

The works and death of Lord Step'annos of Siwnik', and what is related about him.

## [Chapter 32.](#)

The vision of the blessed Methodius, bishop of Patara and martyr about the past, present, and future, with quotations from Scripture, which Lord Step'annos, bishop of Siwnik', translated.

## [Chapter 33.](#)

Marwan the *Tachik* (Arab) general comes to Siwnik'; how the Persian Baban [Babak] became son-in-law to Vasak, lord of Siwnik'; about the burning of Mak'enots', and the devastations of Geghak'uni and Baghasakan.

## [Chapter 34.](#)

About T'anahat monastery, and father Mxit'ar.

### [Chapter 35.](#)

Concerning the bishops of Siwnik' who succeeded the blessed Step'annos in his position.

---

### [Chapter 36.](#)

Shahanduxt, daughter of royalty, and about the great and awesome miracles which occurred in the land of Siwnik'.

### [Chapter 37.](#)

The princes of Siwnik', Sahak and others; their deeds and deaths which occurred in the year 270 [of the Armenian era, A. D. 821] and later; stories and brief notices about their actions and words.

### [Chapter 38.](#)

The coming of Yusup' to our Sisakan land; the ravaging and destruction of the district; flight of the princes; universal crises and conflagration of divine anger; the martyr's death of King Smbat; return of the captives and those who fled; information about developments beginning from the year 358 of the Armenian Era [A.D. 909].

### [Chapter 39.](#)

Concerning the episcopacy of Tat'ev, the blessed Cross and other holy things; and about the succession of patriarchs.

### [Chapter 40.](#)

Concerning Lord Sagho'mo'n and the legacy given to the holy Church during his tenure.

---

### [Chapter 41.](#)

Concerning Lord Yovhanne's, bishop of Siwnik'; the construction of the great cathedral church at the episcopate in Tat'ev, and other construction works.

### [Chapter 42.](#)

Regarding the legacies given by kings and princes to the church and to the patriarchs; and about the monastery's boundaries, [information] which we found written on parchment and stamped with the royal signet ring.

### [Chapter 43.](#)

[Deed] describing the borders of Tat'ev.

### [Chapter 44.](#)

Concerning the destruction by earthquake of Xotakerats' [Vegetarians'] monastery, called Karkop' and its rebuilding by Lady Shushan and Lord Yovhanne's.

#### [Chapter 45.](#)

The construction of Yovhannavank' by Dzagik's son, Vahan.

---

#### [Chapter 46.](#)

Concerning the priest, Lord Ge'org, who was the son of the prince of Siwnik'.

#### [Chapter 47.](#)

Regarding the building of Noravank' in the district of Bghe'n.

#### [Chapter 48.](#)

About the destruction of Ts'uraberd and anathemas against its rebuilding.

#### [Chapter 49.](#)

The death of Lord Yovhanne's and the succession of Lord Yakob and the addition to the church's legacy in his day.

#### [Chapter 50.](#)

Construction of a church and monastery in the district of Vayots' Dzor by Lord Yakob and Prince Smbat. Regarding the blessed Mamas.

---

## **Volume 2**

#### [Chapter 51.](#)

Concerning the legacies given to the blessed church of Tat'ev by means of Bishop Yakob.

#### [Chapter 52.](#)

The rebellion of Yakob; the end of his life; the coming to Siwnik' three times by Anania, *kat'oghikos* of the Armenians; the ordination of Bishop Vahan; and the submission of the Aghuans.

#### [Chapter 53.](#)

Regarding Lord Vahan and the end of his life.

#### [Chapter 54.](#)

The bishops of Siwnik' who were designated after Lord Vahan.

#### [Chapter 55.](#)

Brief accounts; the order [or precedence] of the princes of Siwnik'; and their reigns as kings in later times.

#### [Chapter 56.](#)

Concerning the episcopate of Lord Yovhanne's and his advice.

#### [Chapter 57.](#)

Encyclical of Lord Sargis, *kat'oghikos* of the Armenians, to the entire diocese of Siwnik'.

#### [Chapter 58.](#)

The coming of the Ishmaelites and the destruction of churches and the burning of the monastery at Tat'ev. The rebuilding of the churches and monasteries by Lord Yovhanne's.

#### [Chapter 59.](#)

Regarding the Kings of Siwnik'.

#### [Chapter 60.](#)

Regarding Lord Grigor, bishop of Siwnik', who reigned after Lord Yovhanne's, and his works.

---

#### [Chapter 61.](#)

The cause of the destruction of Kapan and the capture of fortresses. The complete ruination of the kingdom of Baghk' and the demise of the clan of Sisakan.

#### [Chapter 62.](#)

About the number of monasteries and congregations of churches which were in this land.

#### [Chapter 63.](#)

The Bishops who were installed after Lord Grigor.

#### [Chapter 64.](#)

The beginning and cause of the building of the preeminent, blessed, renowned, and glorious convent and assemblage of Noravank'.

#### [Chapter 65.](#)

Concerning the construction of the church at Noravank' and the spiritual gifts given to it as legacy; and about other building and labors undertaken by Liparit and the Orbelean princes.

---

#### [Chapter 66.](#)

Concerning the nature of the great *naxarardom* of the Orbeleans; about their coming to this country; and many other writings about diverse events and deeds.

#### [Chapter 67.](#)

In memory of the God-crowned king of the Armenians, Lewon, and his joining the blessed and heavenly see of Siwnik', at the hands of Lord Hayrapet, bishop of Siwnik'.

#### [Chapter 68.](#)

Regarding the *kat'oghikosate* of the Armenians after Lord Yakob and the diverse circumstances and captivity they experienced; about Hr'omklay and the monastic complexes of the Franks by the coast.

#### [Chapter 69.](#)

Letter concerning the faith and the orders of the Church from the Eastern land to *Kat'oghikos* of the Armenians, Lord Grigor, written by the hand of Lord Step'annos, bishop of Siwnik'. In it is the declaration of orthodox faith of Saint Gregory the Wonder worker and Athanasius of Alexandria.

#### [Chapter 70.](#)

Concerning the world-ruling kings who came after Arghun-Khan, and about all their activities.

#### [Chapter 71.](#)

Conclusion by our lowly self, with accounts of receiving and administering the episcopate of Siwnik', as well as accounts of the events of our day.

#### [Chapter 72.](#)

Bishops of Siwnik'. Their years and numbers. Occupants of the see at Noravank', from the same line. The names of the monasteries and retreats from all themes of this blessed diocese. The *kat'oghikoi* of the Armenians, their years and numbers.

#### [Chapter 73.](#)

Step'annos' colophon to his book.

#### [Chapter 74.](#)

Taxes paid to the Church by the twelve districts of Siwnik', according to the old statute.

## Translator's Preface

[i] The work translated below describes the history of the district of Sisakan (or Siwnik') in eastern historical Armenia, from early times to the late 13th century. Its author, Step'annos Orbelean (ca. 1250-1304), was a major figure in the Armenian Church, as well as the House historian of the illustrious Orbelean family which ruled this district. In the *naxarar* or lordly system which had prevailed across the Armenian Highlands, particular districts were hereditarily ruled by important lordly families or Houses. In our author's day, this system had changed and was changing rapidly, as non-noble families came to the fore, families whose wealth derived from trade and business, and/or war booty. The hereditary rights of old noble families/clans still must have carried an undeniable prestige in some places such as Siwnik'. However, in the case of the Orbeleans, the importance of this family in Armenian affairs rested on more than the prestige of a venerable past. The Orbeleans, during Step'annos' lifetime, were a wealthy and vigorous family in Armenia and had a prosperous Georgian branch as well. They were in business as well as being the legitimate hereditary heirs of vast land holdings and old traditions.

[ii] The year of Step'annos' birth is not known. Some scholars believe that he was born in 1250-60, basing themselves on his statement that he was ordained a priest in 1280/81, and probably would have been between 25 and 30 years of age at that time. Step'annos lived in a period when the Mongol Il-Khanid state ruled with different levels of control over a variety of Armenian-populated areas stretching from Georgia in the north, through eastern and western historical Armenia, northern Mesopotamia and Cilicia. This was a time when Armenians of a variety of faiths and speaking a variety of languages were all formally under the rule of the Mongols. Generally, there was relative stability during much of our author's lifetime. Step'annos received a clerical education and became, successively, a scribe (*dpir*), deacon, and priest. In 1285/86 his father sent him to Cilicia, where "on Easter day they ordained Step'annos the metropolitan of the great see of Siwnik', above all the other bishops here and there, some in Vayots' Dzor and some in Tat'ev" (ch. 66). He returned home in 1287/88. After a protracted struggle with rebellious bishops, Step'annos managed to assert his control over the prelacies of Tat'ev and Noravank', and then commenced industriously rennovating the ruined and dilapidated churches and monasteries under his jurisdiction. Speaking of Siwnik' in the early 1290s under the political rule of his brother, Elikum, and the spiritual rule of himself, Step'annos declared:

"Now because in this period the whole land was ruined and corrupted and worship had been obstructed in the monasteries, everyone universally applied to this lordship [Siwnik'], finding a haven here. [Among the applicants were] the *kat'oghikos* of Aghbania/Aghuania, Lord Step'annos, who came and dwelled with his [spiritual] brother Lord Step'annos [the author], many other bishops, *vardapets*, and *azats*. By the grace of God, this *tun* [House] was a sight to behold, like unto Noah's ark amidst the world-destroying waves..." (ch. 66).

In the late 1290's and early 1300's, Step'annos was active as the leader of the eastern Armenian clergy in resisting the Latinophile policies of the Cilician *kat'oghikos* Grigor Anawarzets'i. His surviving tombstone at Noravank' monastery indicates 1303/4 as the year of his death.

\*

[iii] It is not known when Step'annos began writing his lengthy *History of the State of Sisakan*. In chapter 73 he tells us that he completed it in the year 1299 during the reign of Ghazan-Khan (1295-1304), ruler of the Mongol Il-Khanid state in Persia. The *History of the State of Sisakan* is a jewel of a literary history which

sparkles with Step'annos' own erudition, intellect, and abilities as a writer, written in a Classical Armenian that is awe-inspiring in its beauty. This book belongs to a genre well known from medieval Armenia, the "Universal History." Such works start as far back as the author is able to go, and extend to his own period. Usually, if the sources the books are based on have survived, it is in the description of the authors' own times that these works are most valuable. Such is *not* the case with Step'annos' *History*. Our author also starts as far back as he can, describing the problems he encountered with the earliest material. He, too, relies on his predecessor historians for information on Siwnik' when his native sources fail him. However, because of his use of local sources he also illuminates earlier periods by providing details unknown from other writers. Among the unusual documents he frequently quotes from at length are the sermons of the fifth-century Petros Siwnik', the *History* of Mashtots' of Sevan, now lost *kat'oghikosal* encyclicals, letters from *kat'oghikoi* to the bishops of Siwnik' and responses to them, edicts, Church property documents, inscriptions, colophons and old letters of Armenian and Siwnik' monarchs and the princes of Siwnik'. He is the first premodern Armenian historian to use colophons and inscriptions as historical sources. Remarkably, several damaged inscriptions have been reconstructed in modern times thanks to the inclusion of their texts by the scholarly Step'annos. In chapter 3 he provides a unique (but, regrettably, corrupt) geographical description of the twelve districts of Siwnik', and in the final chapter (chapter 74) he furnishes a long list of the taxes paid to the Church by these districts. Step'annos knew Georgian, and used the *History of K'art'li*. He may have known Persian as well.

Most importantly, along with his literary and linguistic gifts, Step'annos Orbelean was an intelligent, observant man and a reliable historian. The already great importance of this *History* is increased yet more when Step'annos speaks in detail of his own times. As the educated son of the former lord of Siwnik', Tarsayich, and as the brother of the ruling lord, Elikum, Step'annos was in a position to know intimately all the important noble personalities and events of that state and in Armenia, generally. Similarly, his knowledge of Georgian and the existence of an influential Georgian branch of his own family doubtlessly made him privy to information unavailable to many Armenian historians regarding events in Georgia. As metropolitan of Siwnik' he had jurisdiction over all churches and monasteries located there. Furthermore, he had numerous highly placed acquaintances and enjoyed their respect. In chapter 66 where the author described his trip to Cilicia, he wrote:

"..But when Step'annos [the author] arrived there, the *kat'oghikos* [Yakob I, Klayets'i, 1268-1286] had died. Lewon, king of Armenia, received him with great honor and glory and greatly entreated him to remain there and to occupy the *kat'oghikosal* throne. Step'annos did not consent to this..."

He was personally acquainted with three Mongol Khans: Arghun, Geikhatu, and Ghazan, all of whom esteemed this important dignitary and quickly granted his requests. Consequently, Step'annos was uniquely qualified to write an authoritative history of his country and his times.

[iv] Unfortunately, no critical edition of the *History of the State of Sisakan* is yet available. The Armenian text was published first by Karapet Shahnazareants' (Paris, 1859). [Պատմութիւն Նահանգին Սիսական արարեալ Ստեփաննոսի Որբէլեան արքեպիսկոպոսի Սիւնեաց/*Patmut'iwn nahangin Sisakan arareal Step'annosi Orbe'lean ark'episkoposi Siwneats' [History of the State of Sisakan by Step'annos Orbe'lean, Archbishop of Siwnik']* (Paris, 1859), Karapet Shahnazareants', editor. In two volumes, at Internet Archive:

[volume 1](#);  
[volume 2](#).]

Two years later J. Emin issued an edition in Moscow based on two manuscripts which he compared with the Shahnazareants' text. The third printing occurred in Tiflis, 1910, in the Ghukasean Library Series, and is a reprint of the Paris text with the addition of an index. A full French translation in two volumes was issued by M. Brosset (St. Petersburg 1864-66; *Histoire de la Siounie, par Stephannos Orbelian*). A full translation into

modern Armenian was made by A. Abrahamyan (Erevan, 1986). Translations of individual chapters have been made into Russian by K. Patkanov and A. G. Galstyan; and French by M. S. Saint-Martin. The present writer also translated some portions about the Saljuqs, Zak'arids, and Mongols previously for his Ph.D. dissertation (*The Turco-Mongol Invasions and the Lords of Armenia in the 13-14th centuries*, 1979). The current English translation was made from Shahnazareants' Classical Armenian text of 1859.

For bibliography on Step'annos and documentation for this biography, see our expanded discussion of Step'annos (*The Sources*) in [The Turco-Mongol Invasions and the Lords of Armenia in the 13-14th Centuries](#); and also the section on Step'annos in [Studies of Armenian Literature](#). The Orbelean family, believed to be an offshoot of the Mamikonean noble House, is discussed by Cyril Toumanoff in his article "[The Mamikonids and the Liparitids](#)," [in *Armeniaca* (Venice, 1969), pp. 125-137], and (for the Mamikonid background) in [Studies in Christian Caucasian History](#) (Georgetown, 1963).

Robert Bedrosian  
Long Branch, New Jersey, 2012

Published on the Internet, 2012-2015

Chapters 1-50, 2012  
Chapters 51-74, 2015

## A Note on Pagination

The printed editions of these online texts show the page number at the top of the page. In the right margin the pagination of the Classical Armenian (*grabar*) text also is provided. We have made the following alterations for the online texts: the page number of the printed English editions (*Sources of the Armenian Tradition* series) appears in square brackets, in the text. For example [101] this text would be located on page 101, and [102] this text would be on page 102. The *grabar* pagination is as follows. This sentence corresponds to the information found on page 91 of the Classical Armenian text [g91] and what follows is on page 92. In other words, the Classical Armenian text delimiters [gnn] indicate **bottom** of page.

## Transliteration

The transliteration used here is a modification of the Library of Congress system for online Armenian, substituting **x** for the LOC's **kh**, for the thirteenth character of the Armenian alphabet (խ). Otherwise we follow the LOC transliteration, which eliminates diacritical marks above or below a character, and substitutes single or double quotation marks to the character's right. In the LOC romanization, the seventh character of the alphabet (Է) appears as **e'**, the eighth (ը) as **e''**, the twenty-eighth (ռ) as **r'**, and the thirty-eighth (օ), as **o'**.

## Some Additional Resources

### Maps:

The maps are at the end of the pdf version of the translation.

### in English:

from *Armenia: A Historical Atlas* (Chicago, 2001) by Robert H. Hewsen:

Map 98 showing [Siwnik in the 7-10th Centuries](#).

Section from Map 94 showing [Siwnik in the 11th Century](#).

### in Russian:

[Armenia in the 1-4th Centuries](#).

[Armenia in the 5-7th Centuries](#).

*Armenia at the Beginning of the 11th Century*

[Western Lands](#) and map legend

[Eastern Lands](#)

*Armenia and Neighboring Countries at the Beginning of the 13th Century*

[Western Lands and Cilicia](#)

[Eastern Lands](#) and map legend

*Armenia on the Eve of the Mongol Conquest*

[Western Lands](#)

[Eastern Lands](#) and map legend, cartographer S. T. Eremyan

### in Armenian:

[Siwnik' \(Syunik'\)/Sisakan](#)

[The Principality of Siwnik' \(821-987\) and the Kingdom of Siwnik' \(987-1170\)](#), cartographer B. H. Harut'yunyan.

[Zak'arid Armenia at the Beginning of the 13th Century](#), cartographer S. T. Eremyan.

The sources for these maps, and additional maps are available at Internet Archive: [Maps of Asia Minor, the Caucasus, and Neighboring Lands](#) (ancient and medieval periods).

## **Sources and Studies:**

See the file ia\_hsrcees.html which is attached to the pdf version.

## **Chronological Tables**

The following modern chronological tables are attached to the pdf version:

Rulers of Armenia and of Eastern and Western Empires

Rulers of Mongol Empires

Medieval Rulers of Antioch, Cyprus and Jerusalem

Heads of the Syrian, Armenian, Nestorian, and Roman Catholic Churches to ca. 1500

**Chronological Tables**, prepared by Robert Bedrosian, at Internet Archive:

[Armenia and Neighbors.](#)

# Step'annos Orbelean's

## *History of the State of Sisakan*

### 1.

#### *Introduction to our book and some particulars about it.*

God is the source of all beings; love, of all good; wisdom, of all grace.

God is the source of all beings, for from Him issues the essences of all created beings, those visible and those invisible, which are divided into different families and species, each stamped with the character, appearance, and shape specific to its given purpose [**end** of *grabar* [Classical Armenian text] page 43; henceforth shown as, for example, g43]. And love is the source of all goodness, which generates all the varieties of goodness in God, in the angels, and in humankind. In God it motivated Him to create all beings, and it was through love that He did not spare His image, the Son. Through love, the Son did not spare His own self. Through love, the Spirit did not refrain from always giving of Itself to humanity. Through love the angels, who are always united to God through indissoluble affection, manifest such continual care for mankind that they are made the companions of our existence and co-worshippers with us. Among humankind it is love that gives birth to all spiritual and physical good; in the spiritual realm it is so strong that for love of the Kingdom of Heaven people are willing to sacrifice their lives, to endure torments and extreme austerities for many years; and, in the physical realm, to undertake such remarkable physical work as to defy reason.

[2] Wisdom is the source of grace, since all grace, spiritual or material, literary or aesthetic which humanity enjoys derives from it initially. For it is only after much deliberating between the good and the bad, the useful and the useless that science and wise thought and perfected art are born—fruit of a beautiful mother, namely wisdom [g44].

God created man like Him in every way, and implanted these three things in him by which he might fully resemble God. [These gifts are] creativity, love, and wisdom which is reason. The creative instinct makes him a co-creator with God; love makes him always long for the object of his desire, and to always strive to achieve and enjoy it; wisdom differentiates him from irrational beasts and lets him distinguish between the useful and useless, the dangerous and the beneficial and through study and diligence to reach mature development. Observe how he is a creator: teachers through instruction can turn an ignorant person into an accomplished one; priests can make a [spiritually] sick person into a Godly one; while craftsmen can turn something raw and useless into something useful and graceful. A carpenter can take the trunk of a pine tree and fashion a table and chair from it. A tailor can turn sheepskin into shoes and clothing. A blacksmith can extract iron from rocks and make an iron sword or other things. It is in this way that man, like God, is a creator.

Because of this, man cannot conceal these three gifts inside himself and remain idle. Rather, he is always aflame from these sparks, always compelled to act, because [these gifts] always try to come to the fore, and there is ever the strong desire to interact with others [g45]. And thus, for good or ill does man behave through

his desire to create. An embryo forms within his mind and, through wisdom, [the man] is constantly trying to discover a means of giving birth to it and achieving the object of his desire. Thus with an idea conceived in love, developed by wisdom, and then produced or born, man becomes its creator. I too—the most miserable of men, last in the order of the spiritual generations, full of imperfections, lazy when it comes to any useful or durable effort, bereft of illumination and talents—was unable to withstand the God-given tendencies implanted in my own nature. For a long time, having received the seed of love, I was consumed with a burning desire to somehow improve myself if only a tiny bit, to give something to our glorious and holy Church [by writing] about the House of Sisakan. [I longed] to write, according to my abilities, about the patriarchs and the origin of lordship among the great princes of Siwnik', as well as about the origin and occupants of this patriarchal see of Siwnik' so honored by God. And [I longed] to do this not in a vulgar way, but through the inspiration of the Spirit. Indeed, in these latter days, and recently we have seen the memory of this glorious seat of princes almost entirely effaced and destroyed— [g46] physically erased and forgotten and spiritually the situation is not much different.

[3] Having searched through many works, we found no written record of these topics left as a praiseworthy monument to posterity. I do not know whether [such accounts] were never written, or whether they were lost through so many destructions and robberies. Consequently we did not want to ignore, leave to the darkness of ignorance, and lose [memory of] the many useful and praiseworthy stories concerning the nature of the princely [Houses], or about the lay and spiritual deeds of princes and patriarchs. [We initiated this work] for two reasons: first, that our predecessors' commendable deeds of valor not be lost; and second, that the memory of our ancestors and the legacy of our Church not be lost to future generations, that the borders of this principality not be confused, blurred until they disappear, rendered doubtful by a thousand tales, as happened numerous times, and so that the high dignity of princes and pontiffs of Siwnik' together with all their rights and responsibilities be recognized, and that greedy men, deceived by the devil, cannot divest them. Now, despite the fact that this is my intention, my mind has been diverted from it due to my appalling ignorance, and I am very frightened because of my incompetence [g47].

Now, invoking the support and assistance of the prayers of the previous blessed patriarchs and of you, my readers, and the grace of the great Apostolic Church [of Tat'ev] and the assembly of the saints of God, and relying on immutable hope and sincere love strengthened by the Word, which brought all beings into existence, I will lead this discourse over a barely discernible trail of an untrodden road. Beginning with a brief review of the old and new sources so rich in information, I hope that my unerring Navigator will help me to reach my destination. My brothers, as I longed to treat of this subject for such a long time, I engaged in research that took me to places near and far, to monasteries and to coffers containing testaments, and among scholars educated in historical facts. But I found [almost] no memory of the [earliest] traditions specific to this land [of Siwnik'].

[4] Thus from all the historians of Armenia I gathered everything I discovered that was accurate [about the earliest times]. Similarly there was a small amount of information available in the homilies of Petros, Bishop of Siwnik', about Babak who had been the lord of Siwnik'. There was also [information taken] from ancient letters written by the kings [g48] of Armenia, the princes of Siwnik', the Armenian *kat'oghikoi* and the bishops of Siwnik', which had remained from ancient times preserved in a grotto in the blessed monastery of the patriarchs of Tat'ev. [Information was also gleaned from] inscriptions on the churches and from the colophons of books. Here and there I found a number, a date or day of the year relating to some or other actions or words of princes and bishops, to building, ruin, rules and regulations and prerogatives of the Holy See, about generous gifts made to the blessed churches. This information I incorporated into the body of this *History*. Thus do I begin my account with the first [secular and religious leaders:] with the *nahapet* Sisak continuing to the elimination of his line, and with Grigor the first bishop of Siwnik' continuing up to our own calamitous period. Please receive this with love, and be confident [of the accuracy] of what is written. Give thanks to the Holy Spirit; and please, do not blame me [g49].

2.

***Genealogy and antiquity. Whence sprang the patriarchs of the line of Sisak, from Adam onward.***

There is a God-given precept unmistakably aimed at those of us who investigate time: "It is not for you to know times or seasons which the Father has fixed by His own authority" [Acts 1:7]. Consequently, it is only the subsequent names and genealogies that we can pursue with some certainty, from the time of the creation of humankind to the establishment of the patriarchs of the line of Sisak. We do this so that you not think that [these ancestors] emerged somehow from an undifferentiated mob of people or that they accidentally or by ambition received primacy here. On the contrary, they achieved lordship with sons inheriting from fathers deriving from an extremely noble and blessed line.

---

3.

***Borders of the land of Siwnik', its fertility and usefulness for mankind, the number of its districts and impregnable fortresses.***

[Siwnik'] has twelve districts:

1. The first, which [g50] is the native seat of the princes and patriarchs is Tsghuk, named after the district chief Tsghuk.
2. Second is Vayots' dzor which derives its name, Valley of Sighs, colloquially, from the word for sighing or lamentation over calamities (vay).
3. Third is Geghak'uni or Geghark'uni, which takes its name from the Haykid Gegham.
4. Fourth is the district of Sot'k' which name derives from the frequent storms of snow and bitterly cold winds prevalent there.
5. Fifth is Aghahe'j, now called K'ashat'agh and Xozhor'aberd.

[Page 6]

6. Sixth is the district of Haband.
7. Seventh is the district of Baghk', now called Ache'n, named after Baghak.
8. Eighth is the district of Kavsakan, now called Grham.
9. Ninth is the district of Arewik', now called Dashto'n and Meghri.
10. Tenth is the district of Dzork' which contains the impregnable fortress of Baghaberd, now called Kapan.

11. Eleventh is Ernjak and the district of Goght'n.

12. Twelfth is the district of Chahuk and its valley which is called Shahapawnik'.

Such, then, are the twelve principal districts of Siwnik'. However there are also numerous other districts which we have not mentioned, some because they have changed their names, or else because they became subdivided or submerged with others. Now for the unassailable fortresses contained in them. Human ingenuity cannot penetrate them, unless God betrays [the fortresses]: Baghaberd, named after Baghak of the clan of Sisak [g51], who received this district as part of his legacy and built this impregnable fortress on Baghak's Rock, calling the fortress Baghaberd and district Baghats'. Now one of the women of the line of the patriarchs [of Sisak], named Ernjik constructed an extremely fast fortress and called it and the district Ernjak after herself. Therein she established a vault for the land's treasures and taxes. And there are other praiseworthy fortresses which stand fearless and secure from human cunning: Hayraberdd, Grham, Mayri, Shlorutn, Kk'eberd, Barkushata fortress, Andoka fortress, Geghakuno fortress, Bgheno fortress, Van[an]da fortress, Borodana fortress, Hanbada fortress, which was built by the banks of a river by the patriarch Dzag who was of Sisak's clan. He called the valley Dzage'dzor and the fortress Dzage'dzoro fortress after himself. [There are also] K'ashe't'aghuts' fortress, Xozhor'aberdd fortress, Orotan fortress, Siwneats' fortress, Borto fortress, and Shahapawnits' fortress, constructed by the Persian Shahap in the valley named Shahapawnits' after himself. [Shahap] had emigrated and come to live near the patriarchs of Siwnik'. Now in Vayots' Dzor are Kapoyt [Blue] fortress, Hrasekay fortress, built by Hrasek of unbelievable security and with divinely built walls. [There are] Sulemay fortress built by the *tanute'r* Sulem, and many others besides which I consider it superfluous to mention [g52]. And Naxijewan is the capital city. Now, reader, let this be enough about the natural wealth, borders, fortresses and districts of the land of Sisakan.

---

[7]

#### 4.

### ***The early history of the clan of Sisak. How it was established by Vagharshak, king of the Armenians.***

We shall now leave aside all the frivolous tales of old and stick to only the authentic materials about the beginnings of the lofty and magnificent sovereign lords of Siwnik' and the clan of Sisak. For there are a considerable number of these works which are quite useful if we extract solely the material in which we are interested.

In this principality beginning with the patriarch Sisak power passed successively from father to son for a long time. They performed many great acts of bravery in the wars of the Armenian kings and were rewarded by numerous glorious gifts and stations by Persian, Armenian, and even Greek monarchs. Indeed, they became so renowned that [g53] it was commanded that they should have [honors such as] silver thrones to sit on and pearl-studded hair ornaments and the image of a wild boar [engraved] on their signet rings. They also [enjoyed the privileges] of wearing [the imperial] red shoes and bearing a gold mace upon which the name and honor of the clan were written. And so matters remained until the time of Vagharshak, whom his brother Arshak enthroned over the Armenians, thereby initiating the dynasty of the Arsacids (Arshakunis) in Armenia. Vagharshak did not fancy the confused order [existing in Armenia] or that people of no lineage should manage his kingdom. None of his predecessors had concerned himself with this, nor had [his predecessors] established any goodly arrangement [of precedence] for the kingdom. Thus, [prior to Vagharshak] individuals advanced or regressed in accordance with circumstance and chance.

[8] [Vagharshak] established good and laudable arrangements. First, he ordered that the Bagratunis be at the head [of the nobility] and [have the office of] coronant (*t'agadir*). He styled them *aspet* and favored them with a cushion [a seating arrangement] higher than all the others. Next he designated the Canaanite Dzer'e's Gnt'uni as his dresser, putting him in charge of the royal wardrobe. And he continued in this vein [filling offices] as were needed by the royal house. On the eastern front he established the great and primary principality (*nahapetut'iwn*), the clan (*tohm*) of Sisak, and with it [the family of] Kadmean. He ordered that the line of Sisak [g54] should be military commanders over all the royal forces, be second [in rank] in his kingdom and always be on guard for battle at the Gate of the Huns. The first of this clan was named Sisak. From among [Sisak's] sons, [Vagharshak] selected one, a very brave, handsome, and mild-mannered man named Er'an (Ar'an), and designated him patriarch (*nahapet*) of the great plain of Ar'an, from the Arax (Erasx) River to Hunarakert. This land was called Aghuank' (Aghvank') after him, because of his mild and pleasant (*aghu*) deportment. This brief information is provided so that you will realize that not only the people of Siwnik' but the Aghuans have [Sisak] as an ancestor, and that they are older than the others.

[9]

---

## 5.

***The illumination of the land of Siwnik' with the knowledge of Jesus Christ, the conversion of the princes under Trdat by Saint Gregory, our Illuminator; destruction of the pagan temples, construction of churches, ordination of a bishop of Siwnik', and other worthwhile stories.***

My mind is filled with indescribable pleasure at the thought of the marvellous story that awaits telling [g55]. To this point, one might say, we have been discussing a stinking cadaver: in other words, we have been describing people captivated by the errors of paganism living only for physical, transitory, and corruptible pleasures, and devoid of true beauty and incorruptible glory. Now, however, I shall describe [people who enjoyed] a double glory, spiritual and corporeal, lasting and perpetual, which with the gorgeous fragrance of life, the inexhaustible, illuminated rays of the Sun of Justice, embellishes these two worlds with its charms. To this point we have nothing to say about the names and genealogies of the patriarchs and princes of Siwnik'. [Such information] also was not recorded by previous historians. Despite the fact that we labored mightily [to find this material], the little that we found [about the earliest times] we have already set forth. So that you do not insist that I produce lists of the order, sequence, and dates of [the earliest] princes, let me repeat what I said at the beginning of our *History*. We did not find that the ancient historians were zealous enough to ferret out [early] accounts of this land and its masters, as was done for others, such as for the Mamikoneans, for Taron, for the Bagratunis [g56], for [the princes of] Vaspurakan—[for families] which later ruled as kings—for the Georgians and Aghuans.

[10] This is why we found neither lists of the series of princes, nor the dates of their periods. We only found occasional spare traditions, vaguely suggested in the writings of earlier historians. As a result, whenever a particular prince of Siwnik' worked some noteworthy deed, the historians of the time necessarily made mention of it. But deeds of lesser importance or of no importance are rarely if ever treated, as though they were something foreign. This is another reason that we have not adhered to chronological order. But we shall set forth below what valuable material we have come upon in earlier historians and represent it as sequentially as we are able.

[Let us begin] when the spiritual rays of the Sun of Righteousness arose in the land of Armenia and then spread through preaching of the Gospels through the East and North by the martyred apostle, the blessed

Gregory. He baptized the God-crowned King Trdat with all the lords of Armenia and the mixed crowd [of people] in the Euphrates River, and, at that same time, the great prince of Siwnik' with his brigade also received the seal of light which is baptism. And [the prince of Siwnik'] also traveled with Saint Gregory to Caesarea.

On the return trip, he entered the district of Taron and effected many [g57] great deeds of bravery in the battle against the priests of the idols of Gisane'. This is described in the account of Bishop Zenob of Taron. With much treasure and effort he participated in constructing the resting place of Saint Karapet [John the Baptist] and erected there at the monastery of Glak a monument to his power. When King Trdat came and joined them, he ordered all the lords who had accompanied him to return to their own districts and rest, and see to the cultivation of their lands. Since there were still many idols and pagan temples in the lords' districts, the prince of Siwnik' requested of the king and of Saint Gregory that *vardapets* (Doctors of the Church) and teachers come to his land to teach the Christian Gospel and to destroy the altars of the idols. He was granted one of the Syrians [that Gregory] had brought with him. With great joy [the prince of Siwnik'] returned to his land and had his entire family baptized in the font of light. He destroyed all the pagan altars to the idols, converted the entire land to Christianity, and gifted the places where the pagan altars had been for construction of churches, houses of God. [The prince of Siwnik'] also accompanied King Trdat and Saint Gregory when they went to meet [the Byzantine emperor] Constantine. Now when they returned [g58] from Byzantium ("Rome") and came to the land of the Armenians, Saint Gregory circulated around perpetually, teaching and building churches.

[11] [Gregory] went to Iberia/Georgia and thence to Aghuania, going as far as the Masgut's and to the Gate of the Huns. Strengthening all in the faith, he came to Lesser Siwnik'. And entering Amaras, he built a church and left clerics there. Then he came to the borders of the land of Sisakan. The great lord of Siwnik' came to meet him and brought him into his land and into his home. He honored him with costly gifts and royal presents and traveled through all the districts confirming them in the faith. In appropriate spots he erected churches and crosses. When, thank God, all this had been accomplished, everyone was delighted. [The lord of Siwnik'] then came before Saint Gregory and beseeched him to appoint [spiritual] overseers and leaders for the land, a thing that [Gregory] willingly and gladly did. Coming to Vagharshapat, [Gregory] ordained one of the students close to him who was named Grigoris. He was a young man, true and goodly. [Gregory] had him taken to the prince to head the episcopate of the land of Siwnik' [g59]. This was the beginning of the episcopate of Siwnik'. [Grigoris] with great diligence confirmed the faith of the new Christians and never ceased teaching the true doctrine of the blessed Gospel.

---

## 6.

***Accounts from ancient times about the arrival of the blessed Apostle Bartholomew to the land of Siwnik' and about the construction of a church in the district of Goght'n, the conversion to the faith of some [folk], establishment of an altar, and ordination of a bishop.***

It is extremely important and quite appropriate for me to demonstrate that [Siwnik'] received the faith before [other parts of] Armenia, and that they were led to the faith of the blessed Gospel by the holy Apostle Bartholomew. When Bartholomew was returning from Persia, he crossed through Atrpatakan, then arrived with his students at the border of Siwnik' after crossing the Arax River. He began sermonizing in the village of Ordvat in the district of Arewis in [the area of] Baghats' *tun* and in Goght'n. Those who accepted [g60] the preaching of the Gospel were baptized by the hand of the blessed Apostle Bartholomew himself. The blessed Apostle built a church in the western part of Goght'n on a rock, on the site of their resting place, where they constructed a monastery named Tear'ne''ndar'aj [Candlemas]. Great miracles were worked, also. For example,

there was by the village of Ordvat a damaging river which flooded all the fields and vineyards every year. [Bartholomew and his group] prayed and the waters were restrained. The spot is noted to this day.

[12] The prince of the district was named Shar, his son was Xosrov, his grandson Vahan and the prince's wife was Nshna. [Bartholomew] designated overseers for them so that they not return to idol worship. And Kumsi, one of his disciples, was ordained bishop for them. Entrusting [Kumsi] to the protection of the Holy Spirit, he went on to the village of Vanand. One of [Bartholomew's] students, who was named Lusik, died there. They buried him there and built a small chapel over the grave. This place is the site of great wonders and healings to the present. The soil from the grave is especially efficacious for subduing frenzied people. They destroyed a [pagan] altar there and in the same spot constructed a church of dark stone, named in honor of Saint Thomas. Many [g61] miracles occurred there. When the blessed Apostle left there, he went to the capital city of Armenia, Dvin. After this Kumsi died. [The Christians of Goght'n] did not want to remain without a leader, yet there was no one they expected [to fill the office]. And so they appointed a certain (*xuzhik*) [a resident of Khuzestan in Mesopotamia and/or a Syrian] named Babelas as their [religious] leader. [Subsequently], encouraged by the Holy Spirit, they sent a certain man named Mushe' to Saint Thaddeus, but he was unable to return to them. And so, scattered, [the Christians of Goght'n] remained without a head. Some of them retreated to Garuay mountain and led the lives of hermits, engaged in teaching many [folk]. This continued for a long time, until the coming of the great Illuminator to Armenia, [Gregory], who illuminated all the lands of the Armenians. Then they went and requested a shepherd for themselves. [Gregory] gave them a man named Movse's from Taron. He was succeeded by Sahak of Taron, then by Zruandat, then Step'annos, and then Yovhanne's.

[13] The succession continued in this manner, with one succeeding the other, until the present. Realize, however, that [Goght'n] was not separated from [the episcopal jurisdiction of] Siwnik' in this [early] period. At that time in Armenia bishops had not been established since there were not [sufficient] believers there yet. Consequently [the Christians of Goght'n] had separate [religious] supervisors. However, as soon as Saint Gregory illuminated Armenia and arranged for the rights and levels of the bishops [g62], [the Christians of Goght'n] were entrusted to the bishops of Siwnik' to be obedient to their authority. Proof of this may be found in the encyclical letters of the first *kat'oghikoi* and in the old registers which note the taxes due the Church and which fully list the district of Goght'n. Moreover, the princes of Goght'n were from the same line of Sisakan and received this district as their inheritance, as Movses Xorenats'i explains. I will explain elsewhere what the honors and stations of the bishops of Armenia consisted of.

---

## 7.

***Regarding the bishops and princes of the Armenians: who among them were senior and leaders as designated by the great [King] Trdat and Saint Gregory and their sons and grandsons; and regarding the distinct honor and station accorded to the bishop of Siwnik'.***

After Armenia had been born again in Grace, the blessed chief priest, that Apostle-like man of God, Grigorios, ordered the great Trdat to organize his kingdom along the same lines which the Byzantine emperors had done [g63], and to assign to each prince, to the right and to the left, the seat due him by his rank. Similarly, a lovely arrangement was put into place for the seating at table of 400 princes. The principals here were the border lord (*bdeash*) of Gugark', the prince of Aghdznik', the prince of Angeghtun, the prince of Korduats', the Bagratid *aspet*, the prince of the Artsrunik', the prince of Siwnik', and the prince of the Mamikoneans. These were the heads of all the princes of the Armenians. [The king] assigned only four [princes] to serve as his seconds in the kingdom, commanders over the troops and the land in its entirety. These were, in the east, the prince of Siwnik' with 21 princes [under him]; in the north, the *bdeash* of Gugark',

with 22 princes; in the west, the prince of Korduk' with 21 princes; and in the south, the prince of Angeghtun with 22 princes. This is according to the Throne List (*gah namak*) which Ghewond included [in his work] and which, in part, appears in Agat'angeghos and Nerse's.

**[14]** When this had been so arranged, Saint Gregory in his turn organized the ecclesiastical hierarchy, the thrones and honors of the bishops. He ordered that 36 bishops sit with him on thrones and pillows embroidered with gold, 18 on the right hand side and 18 on the left. First on the right was the bishop of Hark'. First on the left was the bishop of Basean. The [bishop of] Siwnik' was seated on the seventh throne [g64] on the right hand side. Samue'l Kamrjadzorets'i relates this [information]. When Arshak became king and the great Nerse's was to be seated on the patriarchal throne, he was sent to Caesarea for ordination by the patriarch Eusebius. Accompanying [Nerse's] were Andok, the prince of Siwnik' who stood at the head of the other princes of the Armenians, and Grigorios, bishop of Siwnik', who stood at the head of the bishops of the Armenians. Arshak commanded that Nerse's not only be ordained chief bishop of the Armenians, but [be ordained] as an independent patriarch, because, he said, "the Armenians should not be subordinate to the chief bishop of Caesarea. Our apostle, Thaddeus, merely built a church there and ordained one of his students bishop there. For that reason have we received ordination there. Consider that the same apostle with three others actually came among us [to preach] and that their graves, see, and church, and [the clerics] whom they ordained are here among us. Why then need we receive ordination elsewhere and from those who are our juniors?" It was under these circumstances that Nerse's was seated as patriarch of the Armenians. Subject to the patriarch in all matters were the metropolitan [bishops], so that all nine of the classes mentioned above be complete. The monarch then convened a great assembly to define all the orders of the clergy without exception [g65]. They designated as patriarch the blessed Nerse's and, subject to him, the archbishop of the Aghuans, who is a *kat'oghikos*; metropolitans: the bishop of Siwnik', of Iberia/Georgia, and Mardpetakan. After these the bishops of Melitene and Sebastia were also designated as metropolitan [bishops].

**[15]** Saint Nerse's honored Gregory, the metropolitan of Siwnik', even more because he had traveled with him to Caesarea. Therefore he gave him a cushion made with golden thread and established Siwnik' as first suffragan of Greater Armenia, [a position] which, in Greek, is known as *protofrontes*. Subsequently, not long after, during the days of Sahak and Mesrop, Bishop Anania of Siwnik' received an additional honor from King Esvaghe'n of Aghuania, namely, that he should have his own royal banner—red with gold tassels, and on it a gold globe and the revered Cross. Moreover, [King Esvaghe'n] ordered that this standard should be carried before all the bishops of Siwnik'. In its proper place I will explain how this came to pass. This is how the bishopric of Siwnik' was established and honored. It began with Saint Gregory, his sons and grandsons, who called [the archbishops] of Siwnik' metropolitans. It was his duty to ordain bishops of the districts. Thus he was the chief of the twelve bishops. Without him [g66] the patriarch of the Armenians could not be ordained, nor could there be a council. The metropolitans of Siwnik', thus, are the head of the council and the executor of its will. Saint Sahak and the venerable *vardapet* Mesrob themselves established Siwnik' as the primary [episcopal] throne as regards doctrine and the right of translation and interpretation [of books]. With the passage of time, numerous quarrels arose in our land of Armenia regarding [episcopal] seniority based on diverse divisions and pretensions. It will be useful [to readers] if I introduce these [issues] in their proper [chronological] place.

---

**[16]**

## 8.

***The death of Gregory, metropolitan of Siwnik', and how the blessed Mashtots' occupied the throne after him.***

We shall now relate what information we have found here and there in the ancient books, and which we have verified for accuracy. When Nerse's the Great had returned from Caesarea and had established the laudable [clerical] orders in our land of Armenia, soon after Gregory, bishop of Siwnik', died after a tenure of 46 years. Andok, the great patriarch and lord of Siwnik', requested from the blessed Nerse's a [spiritual] leader and overseer. Obliging this request [g67], [Nerse's] ordained the venerable Mashtots' and seated him on the throne of the metropolitanate of Siwnik', the second [metropolitan] including Gregory. [Mashtots'] arrived and attracted universal admiration for his virtuous ways, and he corrected this land with many pious regulations. Nor did he cease to educate his flock, day and night. After so guiding the metropolitanate and sitting on the metropolitan throne for some years with such good deportment and such true virtue, he entered the ranks of the angels. The see was vacant for many years after this, for the principality of Siwnik' was disrupted by the Persian kings and for 25 years remained without a prince, deprived of all prosperity for humankind and animals. Now I shall explain this further.

---

[17]

## 9.

***Prince Andok Siwnik' and his deeds; what befell the land of Siwnik' from Shapuh, king of the Persians. How [Andok] went to the great Theodorus, emperor of Byzantium, where he died. This according to the blessed Petros, bishop of Siwnik'.***

We know for certain that the curse of Saint [g68] Nerse's was visited upon [King] Arshak. For Arshak willingly left the kingdom of Armenia and went to Shapuh where he died by his own hand in Anush fortress. His kingdom, like that of Roboam, was split in two. One part was under Byzantine sovereignty, the other, including the lordship of Siwnik', was under Persian rule. Now this Andok, with other Armenian lords, was permanently at the royal court. He was wealthy and prominent among the Armenian princes and had established marriage ties with the Arsacids, as his stunningly beautiful daughter, P'ar'andzem, had been married to Gnel, [King] Arshak's brother's son. Later on, he himself [Arshak] married her, and she was to bear him a son, Pap, who ruled as king of the Armenians after his father.

Now it came about that on one idle day Shapuh, Ormizd's son, king of the Iranians, Aryans, and countless other lands wished to divert himself and held a banquet for all his grantees, for all the lords of all the clans of the Persians and of the Aryan brigade. He arranged them before him according to their precedence and thus did he honor his grantees with cup and seating. He seated the chief mage (*movpete'n movpetn*) at the royal table [g69] with the greatest honor. Then did Shapuh, king of the Persians, speak with deliberation to the Armenian lords: "We know well about the precedence of nobility of the Persians, the Parthians, the native *Pahlavids*, and of the nobles of the [other] Aryan lands. However, as to the precedence among the Armenian nobles, we have been unable to learn anything either from our royal forbears or from any books. And so, Armenian lords, I present you with two choices: either demonstrate from ancient writings the precedence of the noble houses among you—in which case you will receive even greater honor and consideration from us. Or, failing that, if you cannot demonstrate to the Aryan brigade the precedence of status and house amongst you, then we shall bestow your lands, waters, and properties, your villages and palaces on the Aryan nobles and will dismiss you empty-handed and disgraced."

[18] The grandee princes and lords [g70] of Greater Armenia immediately presented the king with the most select of books, namely, the marvellous book of Saint Gregory, called *Agat'angeghos*. The king of the Persians ordered that it be read and translated into the Persian script and language. When he ascertained that it began with his forbear, Artashir, he was delighted and overjoyed in the presence of the Aryan assembly. He took the [translated] book of Saint Gregory, put it before his eyes and began to kiss it effusively and to praise

it in Persian warmly and affectionately because the book began with his own relative, Artashir. Finding in the book a description of the precedence of the 17 noble princely families of Armenia, he started to specify the status appropriate to each in the royal hall, [including] their seating at banquets, according to what was in that book. The 14th rank was awarded to Andok, the lord of Siwnik'. Out of pride and disdain, he refused to eat anything at this joyful royal reception.

The palace servants noticed the flushed and agitated state of the face of Andok, the lord of Siwnik'. However, Shapuh [g71], the Persian king, paid this no heed. But suddenly, urgent news was received saying: "The Khazars with a multitude of troops have passed through the Gates of Chora and have invaded our land." Shapuh, king of the Persians, mustered a countless multitude [of troops] from Syria, Khorasan, Khorazmia, as well as the most valiant braves from Persia, the district of Atrpatakan, from Armenia, Iberia/Georgia, and Aghuania, [troops] speaking 12 different languages from the motley peoples of the icy peaks of the Caucasus Mountains. And he went with this numberless host to intercept and fight them. Andok—with 1,700 men mounted on select and vigorous Arab steeds—went off and treacherously secreted them here and there around the royal *shahastan* of Ctesiphon in the Persian district of Istahr. [Andok], with a small group of select guards, very polished cavalymen, entered the city gates and told the uninformed and innocent people: "I have just now come to [help] King Shapuh." In accordance with the land of Persia's customs and practises, he was provided with lodging, stipends, and delicious and choice dishes and beverages, thereby enjoying the greatest honors. When night [g72] fell, Andok treacherously sent word to his troops. At daybreak, as soon as the gates were opened, Andok's troops suddenly and unexpectedly rushed in. They seized countless treasures of gold and silver, jewelry made of priceless gems and pearls, fabrics woven with gold and of the royal purple, pearl-studded robes from the royal palace and all the Iranian Houses. They took whatever they could carry, and then collected this immeasurably costly loot at Baghaberd. Also, all the provisions of the districts of Siwnik'—wheat, hay, straw; quantities of wine, oil, meats, honey, different kinds of fruit—were gathered here, as well as equipment and weapons for the cavalry.

**[19]** Then Andok, lord of Siwnik', commanded all the people of Siwnik' to flee after burning down their homes and storehouses with their contents. The faithful also gathered into the domed, stone-hewn church at Shaghat all the sacred vessels of the Church, the gospels, the countless blessed gold and silver crosses, the revered relics of saints and holy martyrs. Some concealed part of this within the church's thick walls [g73] using iron tools to create chambers. Others prepared stone hiding places under the altar and filled them [with the Church treasures] or buried them in the courtyards or under the church itself. [The congregants], crying and lamenting as the items were being lowered down, kissed each cross, the blessed reliquaries of the martyrs, the blessed gospels of the prophets and apostles, entrusting them to the church of St. Step'annos. For the next eight days all the people of Siwnik' performed prayer vigils in that church. Then they buried the church itself under a hill of earth. This was the church at Shaghatay in the district of Dzghuk. The people then separated and scattered throughout the country. No one dared to utter the name Siwnik' since, for the next 25 years, our beautiful land was ravaged. After the conclusion of the war with the Khazars, the Persian king, Shapuh, returned and, in a great rage, commanded all his troops to go to the land of Siwnik' and to enslave man and beast in servitude. But once they got there, they found nothing at all except for the holy places and the blessed churches, which they demolished as they burned the whole land of Siwnik'. Now the godless [g74] Persian troops reached the village of Shaghat in Dzghuk district. As they were passing the hill which concealed the church, some of the wily Persian soldiers suspected that there might be something buried there. And so, some of the Persian infantrymen began ascending that hill. Suddenly, however, there was a loud peal of thunder accompanied by an earthquake, and the hill hurled those Persians off. At'ashxoda, [the commander], himself in a panic of fear, fled with his Persian brigade. Once again [King] Shapuh, son of Ormizd, assembled a huge body of troops from among the Persians and the Aryan land of Khorasan and came to war against Baghaberd. Due to the fortifications of the place, he was unable to accomplish anything. Furthermore, [the inhabitants] rolled boulders down [upon] the besiegers and generally killed them off. King

Shapuh ordered that the forces from Persia be redoubled, that a rear guard be put into place, and that the battle against the fortress should be pursued more vigorously.

Once again, as had happened during the first assault, a huge number of Persian soldiers were killed by rocks and boulders being rolled down upon them. For a third time Shapuh replenished the troops and ordered [g75] that this time the rear guard should kill anyone attempting to retreat. [The defenders of the citadel] again, as before, hurled down boulders and rocks killing many people, just as had happened the first and second times. And again the Persian king, Shapuh, flew into a rage and wanted to greatly increase the troops fighting against Baghaberd. But at that point the very grandee princes among the lords knelt before King Shapuh and pleaded that they should no longer fight against the impregnable fortress of Baghaberd and that no more of the Aryan brigade should be slain doing so. Instead, they advised him to devastate all the land around the fortress, and all the districts of Siwnik'. And so a command was issued that all the people and animals of that land should belong to "you Aryans." As for Andok, the lord of Siwnik', finding an opportune moment, he quit the fortress of Baghaberd with an immense loot. He passed over to Byzantine territory and went to the great autocrat emperor Theodosius from whom he found great honor, that is to say, Theodosius made Andok the *Patrician of Patricians* [Presiding Prince]. And he died there, in Byzantium [g76].

[20]

---

## 10.

***Babik comes to Shapuh from Byzantium; the bravery he displays; he again rules his own patrimonial land of Siwnik' and restores it. He becomes equal in status to the Bagratids during his rule. This is taken from the same homily of Lord Petros. These events transpired in the 68th year of the reign of the Persian king Shapuh, son of Ormizd.***

When the Patrician of Patricians Andok died, he left his only son Babik an inconsolable orphan. Despite the fact that the God-crowned, blessed emperor Theodosius the Great had given him many very great honors, [Babik] could not countenance dwelling outside his native patrimony, and deeply longed for his own land. It was as David said: "He pined for his own land," or as the wise saying has it: "People have nothing sweeter than their parents and their very own place." Thus [Babik] left the land of Byzantium and went to the Persian court, to King Shapuh. There, perhaps through some contacts, he was received by one of the royal military commanders, and commenced to display valor in the Persian military exercises. However, he did not reveal to anyone who he was or where he came from [g77]. Now it happened at that time that one of the Huns by the name of Honagur, emerged and looted the entire land of the Persians. But then he said: "Why should there be such a bloodletting and the destruction of so many troops? Come, let us have a single combat, you and I."

Then that Hun named Honagur placed on his very tall and broad figure armor made of 50 different types of material. On his enormous head he placed a nailed helmet lined with iron, on his forehead a protective device made of layered copper plates, his lance was made from an enormous cedar tree, and his sword was forged in a furnace and was thirsting for blood. Thus arrayed, he terrified all the troops of the Medes, Persians, and Aryans, as the panegyric written by the venerable Petros, bishop of Siwnik'—who was a student of Movse's *K'ert'oghahayr* ["Father of Poetry/Grammar," i.e., Movse's Xorenats'i]—informs us. The King of Kings Shapuh was informed that there was a person named Babik at the court who was suitable for such a battle. The King of Kings summoned Babik, and drew up a royal edict, which was stamped with the sign of a wild boar which was on his signet ring. [The edict] stated that "if you successfully exact vengeance on that wretch, generous rewards will be given to you." And [Babik] put his hand on his chest before the king to signify acceptance [g78] of the proposition. Then he sought refuge in help from On High, took his powerful weapon

and adjusted it on himself. He covered his noble form with glittering, pearl-adorned, royal armor; he covered his handsome head with a tiger-shaped helmet; he attached black steel swords firmly to his waist; and on his right arm he bore a shield covered with gold and precious stones. In his right hand he held a very sharp lance. Then he mounted his gallant black steed.

[21] The two enemy champions turned on each other. The clash of swords and the blows of lances could be heard like thunder from morning until the ninth hour. But at that point, the amazing giant Honagur weakened and was defeated by brave Babik. Babik then seized his sword and slew this gigantic man-eating beast who had the strength of a dragon.

As we mentioned above, we took this [material] from the venerable Petros, bishop of Siwnik', from the panegyric he wrote in praise of Babik. The Persians, in their own language, called him brave. Now after Babik had accomplished this spectacular feat, the Persian king Shapuh summoned him, and, with unalloyed delight, began to fulfill the great promises he had made to him. [Babik] requested that [g79] [the king] remove from his palace a mortar full of ashes from the furnace since when it was beaten, it caused [others to say]: "Such is the precedence of the lords of Siwnik', their plans, and their lives, cast down like these ashes." The King of Kings was dumbfounded by these remarks, and commanded that the mortar be removed from the place. And then Babik requested from the King of Kings that his own ancestral lands which had belonged to his people be returned to him. The King of Kings Shapuh granted this and sent him home to his land of Siwnik' in very great honor. Moreover, he stipulated that [the lordship of Siwnik'] have precedence over the Bagratids and be equal to the Mamikoneans.

[Babik] crossed the Arax River and built there a town by the name of Naxkorzan, which translates: "First (*nax*) of what he took back of his patrimony." It was, as we noted, in the 68th year of the reign of the Persian king Shapuh, son of Ormazd, that Babik became the lord of Siwnik'. This was the second year of the reign of Xosrov, king of the Armenians, from whom he received his lordship. This was also the 124th year of the Roman Era and, as we verified, 138 years before the commencement of the Armenian Era [of dating events] [g80].

---

[22]

## 11.

### ***Revelation of the church at Shaghat and the discovery of such holiness within it; the conversion [to Christianity] of Gor, Gazan, and other Persians; the miracles of the priest Tirot.***

There is nothing so delightful in this life than for the legitimate son to inherit the land where he was born and raised and which he himself loves. To the soul of the heir, this is a joy like suckling from a mother's breast, or like a father's kindness. Hence came the desire to see, visit and explore it, to delight in it which the praiseworthy and valiant youth Babik experienced after coming to rule over his native inheritance. He went merrily in search of fun and pleasure in Siwnik's scenic mountains full of game and its plains with their large herds, even if only to see the status of territories, during the first year of his principate. Do not think it was simply a matter of leisure and entertainment. For his soul stirred with emotion at the spectacle of his beautiful country depopulated of men and animals, its towns, villages, and fields—once so beautifully organized—now completely ruined and transformed into deserts [g81].

While [Babik] was observing these distressing panoramas, he came to the district of Dzghuk and to the village of Shaghat in its east. All at once a deer fled before him and sought refuge on the hill where the

church had been concealed. Babik spurred on his Arab steed and pursued the deer. But it happened that his horse's hooves began to sink into the soil of the hill, and the deer vanished. Now Babik, lord of Siwnik', dismounted and ordered the crowd [of retainers] to dig into the hill to free the horse's hooves. And the numerous brigade of Lord Babik' of Siwnik' vigorously began to dig. As they freed the horse they noticed, to their unspeakable astonishment, that from holes left by [the horses's] hooves, the sweet smell of various scents issued forth and seemed to fill the entire valley. Then Babik, lord of Siwnik', commanded that the hill be excavated. Soon after they saw below them a church made of stone with a lovely dome. No one had ever seen such a beautifully built structure, with a dome and the four altars under one roof, on the same terrace, not separated, as is usual for stone churches.

[23] Opening the doors of the church of the Protomartyr [g82] Stephen, they uncovered numerous crosses of gold and silver, many liturgical books and utensils from all the churches of Siwnik', each inscribed with the name of its village. There were also the relics of countless blessed and venerable martyrs in the church walls. The revelation of the church at Shaghat and the discovery of its holy contents occurred on the first day of the month of Hor'i. From that day forth, every year, the lord of Siwnik' together with the bishop celebrated this festival of the discovery of the church as if it were the mother church of all Siwnik'. On that day prayers continued in an evening service, and requests made to God were miraculously granted. It happened that after witnessing the many miracles wrought at the church of St. Stephen and the cures it effected for numerous ailments, two brothers, Gor and Gazan, believed and were baptized along with the multitude of their brigade. These folk had come from Persia with Babik, lord of Siwnik'.

By lot Babik, lord of Siwnik', gave [lands] to Gor and Gazan. To Gor, the senior brother, went the village (*awan*) of Xot, while to the valiant and determined warrior [g83] Gazan, went the town (*giwghak'aghak'*) of Shaghat with its holy church which at that time was called the mother church. Babik, lord of Siwnik', appointed [as the church's head] a faithful, select monastic named Tirot, a blessed and contemplative priest, who had no equal in virtue at that time. Let me write a few words about his miraculous faith. Whenever Tirot was informed that a wolf had seized a kid or a lamb, he would make the sign of the cross with his holy right hand in front of the beast and say: "By Christ I tell you, do not dare to do this thing." And the wolf would put down that kid or lamb and peacefully retire. Similarly, a part of Shaghat was on a mountain by the shore of a small lake, and it happened that when Tirot was seated there with some folk, the frogs in that lake began croaking loudly in their usual fashion. The blessed Tirot became angry with them and cried: "Oh stop that foolish racket!" And for many days those frogs were unable to make their noises. But it happened that on another day the venerable Tirot returned to the same locale, and the residents told him what had happened to the frogs. [Tirot] said: "I command that they be [g84] free to resume croaking." Immediately the sound of croaking was heard and the frogs resumed their loud croaking, just as before.

[24] It happened one night that [Tirot] observed some bundles of wheat at a mill that had caught on fire. He hurled his scepter and it lodged in the midst of the fire. Now the next morning, when he had performed his customary prayers, he ordered that his scepter be brought to him. People raised a clamor, saying: "The sheaves were burning very fiercely, dear lord, how could it have survived?" Angered, he again commanded them to bring it. When people went there they saw that the blessed Tirot's scepter had been unharmed by the fire, by the grace of God. With great astonishment they brought that scepter—which had turned red like fire—to the venerable Tirot. He took the scepter and seeing its color said: "Thus was the heart of the owner of the sheaf wounded, devoured by flame of this red color. And so shall the perpetrators of this damaging accident burn in eternal, unquenchable fire." Now the venerable Tirot had a worker (*mshak*) who had wrought destructive and malicious deeds. Furious with him, the blessed man shouted: "Go. I will not give you your wages." That man departed after secretly and cunningly stealing an ax. He went to the ravine at Andznatu [g85] and crept close to the western side of the church. His legs froze and he was unable to advance, so he returned to the blessed Tirot and, with repentance in his heart, placed the ax before him. The goodly, pious, and generous Tirot then paid the man his salary and dismissed him with his blessings.

As another example: on the far side of the Orotan River there was a water mill. When the blessed one was fording [the river] through deep water, he usually merely made the sign of the cross and fearlessly crossed over. Now one day he espied a beautiful, desirable young ass and thought to himself: "Let me cross the river astride this ass." He mounted the ass and they entered the water. When they were in the middle of the river, that ass turned and showed his gleaming iron teeth. [The ass/demon] asked him: "Have you ever seen an ass with such teeth?" [Tiro] in turn showed the ass a small knife that he had just removed from its sheath: "Have you ever seen an ass-goat like this one? Either you take me safely across the river or I will strike you with this and hurt you." As soon as the blessed one was across the river, that wicked satan vanished. There are many other accounts of the wonder-working done by this venerable man. Many aches and pains were ended and many demoniacs were cured by his prayers. When the blessed one died, he was buried [g86] in the eastern part of the holy church. From his grave many sick visitors received help. He established a rule that women should not enter the church at Shaghat, and the rule was in place until the year 300 of the Armenian Era [A.D. 851]. He established another rule that married priests not be allowed to officiate at the altar in that church.

---

[25]

## 12.

***[Information] from the same homily of Lord Petros. The discovery of relics of the saints in the church of Shaghat after a long time; quarrels during the time of Bishop Yovakim; seniority among the villages and lordly householders (tanuterk'), and, among them, who was ranked highest and held primacy.***

Now it came about that after much time had passed the celebrate priest Yovhanne's who was a servitor at the blessed church, was making his evening prayers alone in that church. Suddenly there was a movement, and sweet fragrance filled the air. On the right side of the church's altar, a brick-shaped stone fell down—right onto the floor of the bema. With great awe [g87], the priest went up onto the bema and looked into the window that had opened. Below him he saw many reliquaries for saints, with the name of each [saint] upon them, and [accompanied by] an aromatic fragrance. [Yovhanne's] quickly went and informed his pious lord Xosrov, who was of the line of Gazan. [Lord Xosrov] came and, seeing this panorama of saints, offered prayers and great thanksgiving to God. Then he commanded that the place where the saints reposed should be covered up using the same brick-shaped rock. The venerable Babik, lord of Siwnik', stipulated that the servitor priests at the blessed church of Shaghat should be pre-eminent [in authority] throughout all of Siwnik' and that the faithful lay officials should also be preeminent as servitors of the mother church and monastic complex of the entire land of Siwnik'. During the mass, the bishop of Siwnik', the venerable and blessed Lord Yovakim, recalled that there was fierce opposition to selecting any particular village as preeminent.

Then Xosrov from Shaghat, he who was of the line of Gazan, wrote an edict to the God-preserved and native lord of Siwnik' and prince of Armenia, Lord Atrnerseh. He ordered that Shaghat's [church, clergy and lay officials] be considered to hold the preeminent honor, as a metropolitanate [g88]. Similarly they ordered that the premier see in Siwnik' should be held by *vardapet* Ge'org of Shaghat. P'anos Oytsets'i, the abbot of Sion, was extremely angered by this, and unwillingly departed. However, no one at the assembly bothered with him. Thereafter there was great discord between Oyts and Aghxitu. Scholars of Aghxitu established that Oyts had been introduced into Siwnik' from Iberia/Georgia. Consequently, Shak'i and Aghxitu were designated as holding secondary [and tertiary] precedence after the supreme dignity of Shaghat. The fourth place was given to the large town of Mren which had an ancient nobility. The fifth [ecclesiastical] throne was awarded to Oyts. This was followed by other localities with their own priests. We briefly mention this for the benefit of posterity, so that there will not be challenges [to the established ecclesiastical precedence] in the future [g89].

## 13.

*The princes who ruled after Babik.*

Babik, son of Andok—the cypress-statured, grand, opulent lord, praiseworthy among all others for his work and his faith—after regaining his own lordship of Siwnik', after taking the ruined districts he found and restoring them so that they were twice as lovely as before, had a son named Vasak. When [Vasak] had reached the appropriate age, [Babik] sent him to serve at the court of the Persian king, Vahram. After a 72-year reign, [King] Shapur had died. He had been succeeded by his son, Artashir, for three years, then by Kram, who is Vahram (Vr'am), for 11 years. This is not the [Vahram] who fought against the Armenians. He was followed by Yazdgird. Babik, who had received the lordship of Siwnik' in the 68th year of the Persian king Shapur, reigned for 21 years in joy and splendor and then passed away. Sam Gnt'uni, who was his chamberlain, went to the royal court and informed them of the sad news. As a result [King] Vahram grieved and felt pity for the lad who was with him at court and decided with his chamberlain to give over the principality [of Siwnik'] to Vasak and return him [g90] to his own land. When [the chamberlain] learned about this he went to Vasak to inform him of the king's decision. But the latter who possessed a malicious, suspicious mind impudently did not greet the bearer of this glad tidings. On the contrary, his response was dismissive and ungrateful: "Has he made me the lord of Siwnik', which is already my natural inheritance?" The chamberlain went and informed the king about this. Vahram became furious with Vasak. He ordered Sam Gnt'uni, Babik's chamberlain, to be brought into his presence, and made him lord of Siwnik'. The latter ruled the lordship for one year and then died, having drunk hemlock which had been treacherously administered to him. [Sam Gnt'uni] was succeeded by Vaghinak, from the native village of the princes of Siwnik', who ruled for nine years. After him came Vasak, Babik's son, who received his lordship from Vahram-Shapur and who reigned for 39 years. We cannot skip over the stories and deeds that unfolded during their tenures, rather we shall include material about them where it is appropriate.

## 14.

*The princes of Siwnik' from Babik to K'urdo.*

Let us first provide a listing of the princes and then [g91] return to it and describe the deeds and events in the reign of each as we are able. First, Babik received the lordship of Siwnik' from [the Persian king] Shapur. After reigning for 21 years, he died. Then his chamberlain, Sam Gnt'uni, for one year. Then: Vaghinak, nine years; Vasak, 39 years; Varaz-Vaghan, who was Vasak's son-in-law, 25 years; interregnum, five years; Gdehon, 17 years; these latter three abandoned the Church which God adorned with a banner, and were seduced by the depravity of fire-worship. Vr'am, seven years; interregnum, one year; a second Vasak, 11 years; Ach'ir, nine years; interregnum, three years; Babge'n, 10 years; interregnum, 11 years while the other [King] Shapur ruled; Yovhan, 18 years; Vasdugh, one year; Grigor, 10 years; Mihr-Artashir, 23 years; interregnum, three years; Piran, one year; interregnum, two years; Sarge's, two years; interregnum, three years; Sahak, 10 years; interregnum, 13 years while the Persians ruled; Grigor who was called *k'ajats' nuirak* ("devoted/dedicated to the *K'ajs*") because of his bravery and superior strength, 16 years; Hrahat, 16 years; Yovhan, 27 years; K'urdo, 18 years.

The 20 individuals, from Babik to this point, ruled the principality inheriting from father to son for a total of 332 years. As regards Grigor, who was called *k'ajats' nuirak*, you should understand that he was not solely [to

be counted as a] Haykid (Haykazunik'). Rather [g92] he was of a line that had mixed with the royal clans of Pahlavik' and Arsacid. Consequently, as extensions of the Arsacids and descendants of the Pahlavids, they reached a level of grandeur which allowed them to form marriage alliances with the kings of Persia and of Armenia. Now one day it came about that Khosrov, son of Ormazd—who was titled *ShahnShah* or King of Kings—was holding an assembly of the Aryan brigade and wanted to pass on to feasting. A very large bird, a kite with black plumage, flew down and wanted to grab something from the king's table. The king was transported with rage since he considered this a bad omen. Not one from that multitudinous assembly made a move [to stop the bird]. But then Grigor [lord of Siwnik'] raised his sturdy bow and, with a movement of his powerful arms, shot an arrow up into the air which knocked the bird dead right in front of the royal table. Filled with pleasure, the king called Grigor to come forward. And he bid him ask for whatever he wanted, even to make a great request. Grigor, lord of Siwnik', replied: "Oh king, my lord and master, allow me to wed your daughter." That request was immediately granted, with great pomp and with rich presents [g93]. And the house of Sisak was overjoyed.

---

[28]

## 15.

***The coming of the blessed vardapet Mesrob to Siwnik' and Goght'n, his travels around the districts, and his purging of idol-worship which had been concealed here and there. [This was done] with the assistance of Princes Vaghinak and Shabit'.***

I will now describe the second conversion of this land, done by the blessed and solicitous man Mashtots', who was called Mesrob. With the decline of the Armenian kingdom, everybody dared to behave according to their own whims. The same thing happened here [in Siwnik']. Pagan sects, which had thus far continued to exist but secretly here and there in the district of Sisakan and in Goght'n, now dared to emerge again. At this time the venerable Mesrob was a scribe at the royal court. Wanting to escape the strife of this world, he became a monk and, in the hope of finding rest, came to Sisakan and made residence in the lovely district of Goght'n where he engaged in practising [monastic] austerity and virtue for many days. When he learned about the reappearance of idol worship, he began to preach [again] and to perform great and awe-inspiring [g94] miracles, not inferior to those achieved by Saint Gregory, to bring the land of Sisak to the [Christian] faith. In this he was aided by Vaghinak, the pious prince of Siwnik'. Similarly, Goght'n was cleansed by their prince, Shabit'.

He so persecuted the multitude of demons that, resembling a column of smoke, they rose brigade by brigade crying and sighing and fled across the Arax River to the areas of Media. After this, the blessed man of God left there in Siwnik' to serve as translators and teachers, his students Benjamin and Anania, who subsequently was ordained into the episcopate, so that the land would not again slide into error. He himself went on to Saint Sahak.

---

[29]

## 16.

***Restoration of the episcopate of Siwnik' under Lord Anania; his travels to Aghuania, and his honoring by their king, Esvaghe'n.***

Now we shall narrate an enjoyable and interesting account of the renovation of our church and metropolitanate of Siwnik', which had become obscured [g95] and lain fallow. For a long while there was neither overseer nor teacher for this land, from the time of the destruction by Andok until the lordship of Prince Vasak. However, during the patriarchate of the great Sahak, when Armenia was being renewed, when he travelled about everywhere correcting and filling the ranks of the clergy, he ordained Anania, a student of Mesrob, a translator full of every virtue, as bishop of Siwnik' to sit on the throne of the metropolitanate called the preeminent throne of the Armenian patriarchate. He came and renewed the twelve districts of the great diocese under his authority.

When [Christian] learning penetrated Armenia at the hands of the blessed Sahak and Mesrob, [Anania] established schools in the land of Siwnik' and put his classmate, Benjamin, in charge of them. Soon everyone was being educated in Armenian and people became familiar with the divine testaments. After this, at Mesrob's request, [Anania] took Benjamin along with him and went to the land of the Aghuans, to King Esvaghe'n. Jointly they created letters for the harsh-sounding language of that [Aghuan] people. He cleansed the remaining idol worship and illuminated the land [g96] with divine teaching for a second time. He left Benjamin there in charge of translation and schools for the young and then he, Anania, wanted to depart.

Esvaghe'n the Aghuanian king, who was the sister's grandson of the first Shapur [A.D. 240-270] son of Ardashir, bestowed upon [Anania] a splendid honor, out of the greatest gratitude. He gave him his own royal banner with a golden fringe, and at its head a golden sphere with a cross on it. And he commanded that it should always accompany the bishops of Siwnik' as they circulated about, in memory of the Aghuanian kings. This was revealed to us by the rhetorician (*k'ert'oghahayr*) Movse's and with complete accuracy by his student Petros, bishop of Siwnik'. When [the Persian king] Yazdgird initiated persecutions against the Armenian clergy and princes, this Anania was there with them. Later he attended the Council of Shahapivan where Yovhan Mandakuni was, and they established Church canons. He occupied the throne of the metropolitanate of Siwnik', *protofontes* of Greater Armenia, for 22 years, then reposed in Christ [g97].

[30]

---

## 17.

### ***The cowardly and wicked Prince Vasak of Siwnik' and the cause of his destruction.***

Alas for the words I must now put down, for I do not do it gladly. Rather, it is with mourning, with pain, and grief burdened by sadness and full of lamentations. The luster of our crown has faded. Kingship departed from the family of the Arsacids as did the chief priesthood from the family of Saint Gregory. Princely succession was interrupted. Goodness and peace were replaced by discord and evil.

After Artashe's, who was the last of the Armenian [Arsacid] kings, a [Persian] *marzpan*, Veh Mihr-Shapuh ruled for 13 years. At the request of Saint Sahak, [King] Vr'am-Shapuh appointed Vardan, son of Hamazasp, [Sahak's] grandson, as *sparapet* ("commander-in-chief"). Then Sahak passed to the ranks of the angels. After Veh Mihr-Shapuh, they appointed Vasak, lord of Siwnik' as *marzpan* ("chancellor") of Armenia. Vasak was *marzpan* while Vardan Mamikonean was *sparapet* of Armenia. After Vr'am-Shapuh [Bahram V, 420-438] [g98], Yazdgird [II, 438-457] ruled as king of the Persians, for 19 years. Yazdgird had a *hazarapet* named Mihr-Nerseh who was in Atrpatakan, an extremely intelligent man but full of malicious schemes. For quite a long while he had been looking for some means of diminishing or eliminating the Gospel of Christ. Vasak was powerful and highly placed in the land of Armenia, and also enjoyed great consideration at the royal court. He had two sons, Babik and Atr-Nerseh, and a daughter who was married to Varaz-Vaghan from the same clan of Sisak. Through the machinations of Satan, hatred arose among them, as Varaz-Vaghan loathed

his wife. Vasak was displeased and wanted to murder his son-in-law, but [Varaz-Vaghan] got wind of this and fled to Mihr-Nerseh. Driven by his jealousy and a strong desire to ingratiate himself, [Varaz-Vaghan] abandoned Christianity and began worshipping the fire and the sun. Beyond this, he was constantly trying to cause friction between the royal *hazarapet* Mihr-Nerseh and Armenia as a way of avenging himself on Vasak.

[31] Now Mihr-Nerseh presented [Varaz-Vaghan] before Yazdgird and acquainted him with his plan, and [Yazdgird] greatly exalted Varaz-Vaghan thinking that this [plan] was a favor of the gods [g99]. He further meditated with the chief mage (*movpetan movpet*) and others of his nobles about converting the land of the Armenians to their own faith—something that all of them approved of. The king ordered that an edict be written to the princes of Armenia and that fire-temples (*atrushans*) and guards (*p'ushtipans*) and priests be sent [to Armenia] accompanied by his grandees. They arrived in Armenia and distributed their letter to the grandee lords. All of the latter, when they learned [the intent], fell to grievous mourning. Immediately the bishops, abbots, nobles, *sepuhs*, and senior *tanute*'rs assembled under the leadership of Yovse'p' who held his throne from Saint Sahak, Ananias, bishop of Siwnik', and Ghewond the priest. They consulted together and jointly wrote a clear letter in reply to the king about their faith. When the emissaries had returned [to Iran] they presented this letter to the king. He became furious, with his heart burning relentlessly like a snake twisting about, and commanded that all the Armenian princes—those willing and those opposed—be summoned and brought before him. In a great assembly he furiously offered them a choice between two options. Either they could choose life and accept the tenets of magianism, or [g100] they could face extermination with their clan and their children. They made no reply immediately, but retired to deliberate. They decided to submit for a time and seemingly to agree to the royal order in order to return to their own land, to save their country, and to ensure their safety, either by war or peacefully. This is what they did. With great gifts they were released to return to their own land, bringing along with them fire-temples and [Zoroastrian] priests.

[32] Suspecting duplicity, the [Persian] king kept as hostages Ashusha, the *bdeash* ("border-lord") of Iberia/Georgia with Vasak's two sons, Babik and Atr-Nerseh. Now the Armenian princes vowed to each other and swore on the Bible and in writing, that they would remain united and die for the Christian faith. When they arrived in their own land, in the district of Ararat, they began implementing their secret plan. They killed some of the mages and put others to flight, they scattered the [sacred] fire and poured water on it. Vasak, however, was embittered and wracked with uncertainty—first, with a father's love for his sons who were being held hostage, something which caused him to lose his mind. Then there was the fear he had of his enemy, Varaz-Vaghan, who was close to the king and was awaiting Vasak's death [g101]. There was also the fear that he could be deprived of such a great and noteworthy glory and of his patrimonial lordship. For these three reasons he was continually plagued by doubt, which deprived him of sleep at night and of peace during the daytime. Since it is a tendency of men to wander and weaken in such cases, [Vasak] so weakened and betrayed the oath he swore on the holy Gospel. I would venture to suggest that had he—by just one word—confessed and ended his crime, the infinite mercy of God would not have abandoned him. However, [his behavior] was the product of wicked despair. God alone, and no one else, during the time of [Vasak's] judgement, will know the circumstances.

Thus deceived by a wicked *dev*, yet hoping to do penance, he betrayed his oath and thereby missed the chance to save himself and his children from misfortune. He sent Vardan [Mamikonian] and the Armenian army to [fight in] the Aghuanian war, since the Persians had gone there. Then he himself communicated his intentions to keep faith with the king, writing a letter to the *hazarapet* Mihr-Nerseh, as well as to the Persian military commanders in Aghuania. He did this considering it lawful, as Scripture says, to be as loyal to physical rulers as to God. He also caused others to rebel from Vardan and the Kamsarakans and other nobles (*azats*) with them [g102], such as the Armenian princes Tirot's Bagratuni, Gadishoy Xorxor'uni, Giwt Vahewuni, Varaz-Shapuh Paluni, Arte'n Gabeghen, Nerse'h Urts along with many other *ostikans* and *sepuhs* of Houses and clans, who feared the might of the Persians and wanted to curry favor with the king. They took over all the

fortresses and strongholds of Armenia, and they brought all the children of the Mamikoneans, Kamsarakans and other nobles to Vasak who kept them with him in his impregnable fortresses in the land of Siwnik'. Vardan learned about this deadly and bitter news. In great triumph he returned from the Aghuan war and, with the other nobles, passed many days deciding what to do. After losing all hope, they decided to prefer death to life. They went to the district of Artaz where, a month later, the great military clash ensued in which the blessed Vardan and his other comrades received the crown of martyrdom. When [King] Yazdgird learned about this, he fell into deep and inconsolable sorrow.

[33] Now Vasak, thinking to show great loyalty and trustworthiness, brought the captive children and the blessed clerics to the royal court. A great inquiry was held [g103] in which the impious Vasak was defeated and confounded on every point. Indeed, he did receive just compensation for his activities, because he remained under guard at the royal court until his death. Eghishe' and Ghazar P'arpets'i have narrated the details of this. As for the rule of Siwnik', this was taken by the apostate Varaz-Vaghan who was possessed by devils and was eventually strangled by devils. He was succeeded by the equally evil, foolish, giant of a man Gdehon who, as an unbeatable fighter, was forever battling with the remaining Armenians. Vardan's brother's son, Vahan, with help from On High, slew that monster, Gdehon, in the district of Shirak, close to the village named E'shte'. [Gdehon's] servants removed his inner organs, wrapped them in reeds, and brought and deposited [Gdehon's] remains in the mausoleum of his ancestors.

---

## 18.

### ***The martyrdom of the glorious and venerable sepuh of Siwnik', [Y]azd, at the hands of Mihran during a Persian [military] review.***

I am happy now [g104] to describe things more pleasant than the above. For if the disgraceful conduct of the prince of Siwnik' on one occasion caused us confusion, defeat, and total destruction, on at least one other occasion we may raise our heads high. Crowned in a beautiful tiara and confidently dressed in splendid raiment, so to speak, we healed our old wounds. If branches cut from the clan of Sisak occasionally gave us thorns and brambles, now behold they produce roses and fragrant lilies and beautiful, delicious fruit whose fragrance has been given to us by the Lord.

[34] Now while it is true that the noble lords of the state of Sisakan had been seduced by the old deceiver and had followed the [Persian] king's will, receiving in exchange an inheritance of corruptible, transitory, worldly glory, [this was not the case with] some of their own blood brothers who had been enlightened by wisdom from On High. Illumined by the light of faith, they did not stray onto a path that leads to the abyss of perdition. These folk, bearing the names Babge'n, Bakur, and Yazd, abandoned all worldly things and forsook [financial] glory and greatness. No, they followed the guiding voice of joy. They left the brigade of Siwnik' and ranged themselves with the Armenian oath-keepers. This was led and directed by the venerable and brave Vahan Mamikonean, who was [g105] the nephew (brother's son) of Vardan. He had evidenced great bravery in numerous battles. When Mihran came to Iberia/Georgia with many troops to wage war against the Iberian king, Vaxt'ank, Vahan and the Armenian troops also went there to aid Vaxt'ank since they were confederates. Descending to the field of Charman by the Kur River, they clashed with the Persians and defeated them at once.

Now the Iberians, frightened by the multitude of Persians, took to flight. When Vahan had been told about this, he turned back with his brigade. In that place Vahan's younger brother, Vasak, received martyrdom. Meanwhile Mihran, who was in pursuit of the army, captured Hrahat Kamsarakan brother of Nerse'h, lord of Shirak because his horse, which was galloping furiously, threw him. Still in pursuit, [the Persians] also seized the praiseworthy *sepuh* of Siwnik', Yazd. Overjoyed, Mihran turned back. Vahan came upon Babge'n, heir to

Siwnik', seriously wounded and lying on the ground somewhere. He put him on a horse and took him away, saving him. Because of his wounds [Babge'n] did not circulate around with Vahan but hid in safe retreats.

The loathsome Mihran, taking the two [captured] *sepuhs* with him [g106], pursued Vahan. Daily [Mihran] had them come before him in fetters, insulting and tormenting them bitterly to make them adopt his own faith. Through unseen help, Hrahat Kamsarakan escaped. This caused the enraged Mihran to suspect that Yazd Siwnik' also would escape. And so [Mihran resolved that] the sinless lamb [Yazd], like a year-old lamb, be sacrificed as a fragrant offering to his Lord. [35] He had been especially aroused to do this by the impious, Cain-like Lord Gdehon Siwnik', who was the brother of Yazd. Thus the tyrant [Mihran] had been transported into a violent rage. He began to speak with Yazd, threatening dreadful punishments and using various tricks to shake his Christian faith. He mingled his threats with the promise of very rich presents if he would conform with his will. The blessed one listened to all this in silence, and, with a sublime expression, he raised his eyes toward Heaven, the object of his desire, and asked for assistance. Heartened and fortified by an unspeakable hope, he replied to Mihran: "Were our transient physical bodies for sale and I could buy one, I being in pain but [g107] loving life, then I would certainly give everything I own to purchase [a new body]. But when it comes to eternal punishment and the unquenchable fires of hell, it would be a great folly to pay the price in wealth when the result is so uncertain, and because no one knows if one's life span will be long or short. Perhaps today's buyer—who is happy today—will die tomorrow and be sent to the outer darkness. If I love this wretched and fleeting commodity [life] why should I buy it today to live when soon I may receive it with glory and rich gifts. I would rather remain where I am. I consider it better, more honorable, happy, and satisfying to die for Christ rather than to live on as an apostate for thousands of years in great glory and happiness, only later to inherit the endless punishment reserved for such."

When the impious Persians heard these words from the blessed Yazd, they attacked him like uncaged beasts, as though they wanted to drink his blood. The murderers took him to the shrine of the blessed Apostle-like martyr Gregory, in the village called Bagawan, in the district of Vagharshakert, in the state of Bagrewand. This was on a flank of the mountain called Npat, about two stones' [g108] throw from the blessed shrine. It was there that they beheaded the blessed man. The Christians took his head and placed it in the holy shrine of Gregory. The blessed and venerable *sepuh* of Siwnik', Yazd, was martyred on the 16th day of the month of *Hor'i*. At that place, very profound miracles occurred and healings for all sorts of ailments. He intercedes for us and our land with Christ, to Whom glory be forever.

---

[36]

## 19.

***The martyrdoms which occurred here and there in the district of Vayots' Dzor and the martyrium that was built between the rivers Eghegik' and Mozan, near the hill where the fortress was.***

After the destruction of this land of Armenia and the martyrdom of the blessed Vardanians, for 23 years the Persian sword did not cease to inflict harm on the Aramean people. After King Yazdgird, the accursed and blood-thirsty Peroz ruled for 22 years. Under his rule the merciless destruction and slave-taking, the burning down and destroying of the land of the Armenians became more severe. But when the Hephthalite king killed [Peroz] together with his entire House and all his sons, the peace-loving Persian king [g109] Vagharsh ruled. In the very first year of his rule he made peace with Vahan and the Armenian lords, made [Vahan] *marzpan* of the land, swore an oath, and established peace with the Armenians.

Now since the time of the blessed Vardan, Persian troops overran the entire country. Some pursued those taking flight, some went against the fortresses and strongholds. They were attempting to completely exterminate the Armenian nation. The sword was ever held over the heads of Armenian soldiers to make them, by just one single word, deny Christ, or bow their heads to the sun otherwise to be beheaded on the spot. Thus there were martyrs everywhere in Armenia, among the rocks, ravines, valleys and hills, massed densely like stars in the night. Here in the the land of Sisakan in the district of Vayots' Dzor one could observe fugitives from the Armenian forces who wanted to cross over into the secure land of Artsakh. They were pursued by the impious At'ashxuday at the head of the vicious Persian troops. They reached the area between the rivers Eghegik' and Mozan within the district of Vayots' Dzor near a hill surrounded by huge boulders where [the Armenians] were seeking shelter. The Persians [attacked and] caused torrents of blood to flow [g110], killing many of the flower of the Armenian nobility for the name of Christ. Astonishing miracles were seen over them, sent from On High. Then [the Persians] pressed onward in pursuit of the others. They came upon and slaughtered about half of them near the foot of a stronghold in a narrow valley. They were led by a man named Martire' and [after the killing] the place was called Angeghdzor ["Ugly Valley"]. [The Persians] advanced farther and killed 300 more [Christians] by the waters located between [the villages] called Ostink' and Artaboynk'. Subsequently the residents of the area built a church over this spot.

[37] Then the Persians crossed a gorge on the left, overlooking the holy convent called Ts'aghats'k'ar, situated on an elevation between the two villages mentioned above, and there they massacred a very large number of *sepuhs* and elite warriors. The Persians pitched their tents in the villages. They were exhausted from all the killing and wanted to halt for the night. Now it happened that during the night a Persian who was guarding the camp saw the heavens open and a flood of bright light spread over the bodies of the slain. And he saw high up a golden chariot in which was seated a woman dressed in the royal purple, surrounded by a mass of luminous warriors. She saw the carnage and wept and sighed, and spoke fondly to each of them. The Persian [g111] was terrified and wanted to alert the troops, but his feet and tongue were paralysed. At last one of the blessed warriors approached and asked: "Who is that?" And the angel replied: "That is the mother of the Heavenly King who has descended to gather up the martyrs and take them to her blessed Son. She wants to praise them one by one." This vision lasted until morning and then disappeared.

Now at daybreak, when the troops wanted to depart, they discovered that same man lying on the ground and they asked him what had happened. Pointing with his finger, all he could reply was: "The mother (*mayr*) is there (*and*).\" As a result, the name of that place became, and is to the present, Marand. The Persian man threw himself on the remains of the saints, was healed, and he became Christian. For the rest of his days he served the saints. Subsequently the Christians gathered the saints' relics and built a chapel over them. Some Christians had immediately buried those blessed ones who had fallen earlier on the hill. At that time the *kat'oghikos* was the venerable Giwt [Giw't I Arahezats'i (Ot'msets'i), 461-478]. When he heard what had happened, he ordered that a large martyrium be constructed over the saints. The relics were gathered up and placed in reliquaries. Then work was begun on laying a foundation for a cathedral there. This was undertaken by Hrew, Shahere't, the priest Arshe'n, and Abdisho in the ninth year of the *kat'oghikosate* of the venerable [g112] Giwt, *kat'oghikos* of the Armenians, on the fifth day of the month marking the beginning of summer.

[38] Having completed this with great expense, they created a meeting place of marvellous construction like the sky, with two domes and three altars, porches on two sides, halls, and rooms above with columns, in all a magnificent structure. Ownership of the land from the great river as far as the top of the mountain flank called Srkgho'nk' was given in inheritance to the servitors of the blessed church.

When the work was completed, the venerable *Kat'oghikos* Giwt and Bishop Anania of Siwnik' arrived and, with a huge crowd, placed the relics of the blessed ones in their final resting places. The consecration of the church lasted for eight days, to the glory of Christ our God, Who is blessed for all eternity. In our day, after the place had been destroyed, it has become inhabited by villagers and is called Xotoralez. We learned all this

through inscriptions, partly from books, and the names of the places and the martyrs from authentic old traditions. After verifying [this information] as accurate, we have related it to you [g113].

[39]

---

## 20.

### ***The bishops of Siwnik' who succeeded Anania, and about the miraculous ordination of Lord Erits'ak.***

After the blessed bishop of Siwnik', Lord Anania, was taken by God, he was succeeded on the [episcopal] throne by Lord Nun, a good and virtuous man, for eight years. The latter was succeeded by Gaghat, for 17 years, and he was succeeded by Mushe', for 36 years. Then, against his will, the blessed father Erits'ak, grand steward (*e'gonomos*) of Erits'avank', whose religious austerity caused him to wear a hair shirt, was brought and established as bishop of Siwnik'. He held this position for one year. We shall describe briefly some information about this. During the reign of Kawad, king of Persia, and in the *marzpanate* of Armenia of Vahan Mamikonean, in the patriarchate of *kat'oghikos* Lord Mushe', there died the venerable bishop of Siwnik', Mushe', who had occupied the see for 36 years. Now at that time there was no [reigning] prince of Siwnik', but [the former prince] was survived by his wife, a devout woman full of piety named Sahakia. There was also no spiritual overseer. Then all the *azats*, *tanute'rs* and senior clerics of the land raised their voices to the pious Sahakia requesting a [spiritual] leader.

She formed a large delegation, choosing [g114] respected men and select clerics, and sent it to the blessed *kat'oghikos* of the Armenians, Mushe', with many rich and suitable presents. [Sahakia] entreated him to visit her land, select a worthy man, and seat him on the throne of the metropolitanate of Siwnik'. And indeed, the pontiff agreed, moved with compassion for his flock. He delayed his departure until he had made arrangements to travel with the pomp befitting his patriarchal rank. Mounted on a white mule, on a saddle made with gold, accompanied by bishops and many servitors, and preceded by the sign of the cross, all glittering with gold, he set off—resplendent as the sun, singing psalms and harmonious hymns. Arriving at the border of Siwnik', at the district of Vayots' Dzor, they observed that all the vegetation had long since withered and dried up. Weeping, the patriarch raised his arms to heaven and begged the Lord to visit [this land]. God immediately caused the sweet dew of rain to descend. It lasted for three days from morning until night and people marvelled at the sky with fervent thanksgiving.

[40] Now when they had neared the residence of the princes of Siwnik', messengers went out. Then the princess with her children, with all the cavalry brigade [g115], and with a large group of priests and lords came out to meet the *kat'oghikos*. With great joy all of them knelt [before him]. Then on the right and left, some on foot, some on horseback, they accompanied [the clerics] chanting blessings and shouting welcome so that the entire valley in this district resounded like thunder. With such splendor they conducted [the *kat'oghikos*] to a royal tent where they seated him on a cushion woven with gold and encrusted with pearls. This area was the seat of the princes and was called *Kits' vtakats'* ("Near the Streams"). Following a rest of three days, the patriarch assembled a meeting to ordain the leader they selected. The entire crowd cried out as though in unison: "We want Father Erits'ak as our spiritual leader. No one else will do." The patriarch commanded that horses be readied to quickly go to the monastery [where Erits'ak] lived. And he said to the prince: "You must also go there on a pretext of going hunting and guard the monastery doors so that, should he learn about this, he will not escape, and bring our efforts to naught."

Now the lady Sahakia presented him with the royal tent with all its furnishings and cushions, and placed him on a vehicle covered with gold drawn by white mules. A dense crowd of people followed it [g116]. After they

had passed through the gate of Erits'ak's monastery, which is in the district of Baghk' called K'ashunik' and currently Barkushat, the blessed Erits'ak wanted to descend the wall by a rope and flee. However, the guards would not permit this. The monastery was located in a charming place and was a wonderful structure perched atop a high plateau. The church, dedicated to the blessed Protomartyr [Stephen], was built by Erits'ak'. [The complex] was surrounded by a wall of large stones, and had on its premises only 40 cells, where monks lived always dressed in sackcloth, always silent. [They were] like lamps continually burning and never going out, each in his closet, shedding the uninterrupted light of spiritual grace.

**[41]** For many years Erits'ak' had dwelled in the district of Baghk', in a cave. Then he went to the monastery of the venerable Giwt, spending many days practising a severe asceticism. Eventually, with the help and command of the holy Lord Giwt, he came to this place with 12 clerics and the many rich gifts of Father Giwt. Here he built this church, called the New Jerusalem. However, lepers who had been persecuted in various places and who had been gathered here by the holy father Giwt, objected to Erits'ak's constructions. When the holy father learned of this, he came and convinced them [g117] to make peace by stipulating that the monastery would provide for their needs. He himself participated in the daily work and gave food to the workers. Thus was this house of God built as a place where the Lord is glorified, and it became a dwelling place for men with angelic faith.

The venerable patriarch Mushe' [I, Aylaberts'i (526-534)] entered the monastery and greeted the church. Then he sat there and sent as a messenger the son of a widow who was from Yovhannuvank' in Aragatsotn, and was the patriarch's chief deacon and scribe, and also princes and other folk, but they were unable to convince [Erits'ak]. Then the *kat'oghikos* himself went to the room of father Erits'ak, full of righteous rage, made the sign of the cross, and said to him: "Why are you persisting in such stubbornness? If there is a *dev* in you, God can expell the wickedness that excites his wrath." At these words from the holy man, a thick cloud of smoke, resembling a whirlwind, rose from the house. Then a flock of white doves alighted on the roof of the room and one of them flew down and perched on the *kat'oghikos*. Then it left him and perched on Erits'ak's broad cowl where it turned about and spoke in a thin voice like a human: "He is worthy. He is worthy." When the multitude saw this, they shouted out in unison: "He is worthy. He is worthy" [g118].

**[42]** Now when the holy father saw this, he no longer dared to resist. Rather, falling on his knees before the *kat'oghikos*, he said in a sobbing voice: "May thy will be done, Lord, not mine." And so the lord took him by the hand and led him into the church. Putting him on the *bema*, he ordained him metropolitan of Siwnik', and then took him and seated him on the [metropolitan] throne. As for [the *kat'oghikos*], he took leave of them all with exaltation and unmeasurable splendor, and returned to his patriarchal throne in Dvin *shahastan*, giving glory and praise to the Lord of all. When the venerable Erits'ak had occupied the throne for one year, he was translated to the Upper Jerusalem, where the assembly of saints are and where their chief priest is Jesus Christ, the God of all. There is also a legend told about him, to the effect that he had gone to the blessed city of Jerusalem and had delayed there until the day of holy Epiphany, when he was at the door of the blessed cave in Jerusalem and recalled his own blessed retreat and his brethren, and then he began to weep bitterly. With the greatest longing he wished to be back with his brethren instantly. Now there was a woman who was a witch who learned about this, perhaps at the instigation of the Holy Spirit. She asked the father: "Why are you crying so bitterly?" And he told her the reason. Then she replied: "Oh holy man of God, ask forgiveness of my countless sins from Christ [g119], and this very moment I will give you what you seek."

When the father heard this, he made bold to do as the woman asked, succumbing to his own desire and trusting in the infinite forgiveness of God. Then the woman took a vessel and filled it with water, and performed some of her sorcery, having the blessed one pass over it [or, sit on it]. He immediately found himself at Erits'avank' at the door of the church, before the divine liturgy had ended. When he had recovered his senses somewhat, he said nothing to the other brothers until they met for supper. Then he made matters known, greeting all of them and relating these unbelievable events to them. He also had some proof which he

showed them, for he had brought along some greens [vegetables], oranges, and bitter oranges and thereby convinced them. After they rose from the table, [the clerics] went to the door of the church and spent the night in a vigil, asking forgiveness for that woman. Humane God heard this and granted her forgiveness. This was revealed to the blessed father in a vision. For such mercy may He be blessed and praised and glorified thousands upon thousands of times, now and forever [g120].

---

[43]

## 21.

### ***Brief account about Father Giwt and K'ristosase'r; and the construction of a monastery on the banks of the Arax [River].***

[Dear reader] do not consider the previous discourse foolish or regard me as a superfluous [author]. On the contrary, it is germane to our undertaking that we describe [such] narrations about the land of Sisakan. It is important that we reveal to you in the course of the writing we have begun, all such miraculous things—because they happened here in our land. Now it came about that in the district of Goght'n there dwelled a believing prince named Shabit'ay who had two grandchildren, named Vasak and Shapuh, the sons of his sons. Satan had created great discord and envy between them over their share of their patrimonial inheritance. And they fought over the lovely village of Orduat. In this battle Vasak struck his brother with a sword and wounded him almost to the point of death. Then he repented with brotherly affection, fell upon him, wept torrents of tears, heaved with heartbreaking sobs, and vowed to God that if He healed his brother he would give up all wordly things. And the brother was healed [g121].

Vasak, to save his soul, immediately arose and vanished. He went and hid in the fields and then continued on to the Baghk' area. When he reached the top of a mountain, he surrendered himself to the grace of the Holy Spirit, endlessly repeating the psalm "Lord, make my way straight according to Your word. Let not all my sins rule me." Then he travelled through the districts by the bank of the Aghawni River, where he passed the winter season. After that he crossed another stream and approached the fortress in the district known as K'ashunik', which is now called Barkushat. He lived for three years and six months in a cabin on a barren hill. This was a remote area covered with dense forests. Below it a vast, broad plain stretched to the bank of the Arax River. Now his family, not knowing where he had disappeared to, sent people into Armenia, Byzantium, and Persia [to search] and they mourned him bitterly. But they found no trace of him.

[44] Now it happened one day that the blessed father had completed his evening prayers and wanted to rest, when he heard the sounds of song and play. This infuriated him and he said: "I could not distance myself far enough from the world that I would not hear its noises." That same hour he arose and quit the place—walking until sunrise down in the plain, led by an angel. Reaching the bank of the [g122] Arax, he came upon a small valley in the midst of which was a huge rock with a small cave near its base. He dwelled there for 10 years, eating roots and the fruit of trees, for this place was like Egypt, summer and winter. But according to the dictum that "one does not light a candle and hide it under a bushel" it was the will of God that his servant, Giwt, previously called Vasak, should become known. Now it happened that the son of the Persian king came out to hunt in the vicinity of that mountain which faces the Mughan plain. He spotted a stag with a luminous cross between its horns. Like Eustace, the young man separated from his troops and was led as far as the banks of the Arax to the place known as K'aravaz where the river split into three streams. The cross now took the form of a luminous man who ran into the water. When the young man saw this, his eyes were dazzled by the light and he fell into the river with two of his servants and crossed it. He was led by the horned animal to the bottom of [Giwt's] rock, where the animal disappeared.

Looking up they saw an enormous bear seated with one paw in the hand of the saint who was healing its wound. The youth was terrified. Since the holy man was apprised of his coming through a vision, he called out: "Fear not. Come to me." And [the prince] said: "What are you?" Then [Giw]t replied: "I am a man, like you." [The prince] asked: "Who are those with you [g123]?" Giwt replied: "These are my dogs." [The prince said]: "Tell them to leave." And [Giw]t so ordered. Then [Giw]t arose and descended from the rock and preached the Gospel and taught [the prince] faith in Christ. [The prince] liked this exceedingly and requested baptism. Then, immediately, when the Lord's blessed one heard this order, he blessed the youth and his two servants. And he named him K'ristosase'r ("Lover of Christ"). He lived there many days practising extreme asceticism. Then K'ristosase'r said: "Father, I long to have a church and to see in it the radiant orders of the clergy, for we should not dwell in solitary goodness on this rock. Rather, order me and I will go and bring silver and will build a church, found a congregation, and assemble brethren." Thus [Giw]t ordered him to go. He returned bearing a good deal of silver. They called craftsmen and built a church and assembled many brethren.

**[45]** Now the Persian king had sent many emissaries over land and sea making enquiries about his son. When no trace of him had been found, he lamented bitterly night and day, nor could he be comforted in any way. Then one night an angel informed him in a vision that "your son is in such and such a place, living like a Christian." He rejoiced exceedingly over this and quickly sent a delegation to go and fetch his son. They came and found him, but were unable to detach him [from Giwt]. They returned empty-handed and said: "He will not come [g124] and begs you to leave him be. "I have a Father," he said, "Who has given me a second life, a birth in light incorruptible, which I do not wish to quit. He has promised me a Kingdom which is tens of thousands of times greater than yours." At this point the king himself arose and came to the place, but he found no one there except a sick person. [The king] asked: "Where is my son?" [and the sick person] replied: "An angel told them of your approach, and they have fled." [The king] commanded that [the sick person] should be slain, and the place burned and demolished.

Then he returned to his own land. But he became severely and grievously ill from longing for his son. Once again he sent messengers and begged to know what he needed. [K'ristosase'r] wanted a great amount of treasure and craftsmen to rebuild the ruined place. Immediately [the king] sent a thousand men, five hundred stone workers and five hundred wood workers. They changed the place for another site farther up the rock [a place which] they made level. And there they built three churches in the name of the Holy Trinity. The renown of this place spread throughout all the land, and a multitude of brethren came and filled up the House of God. Toward evening they began a vigil. And lo, in the middle of the night a radiant man appeared holding a cross in his hand, and saying: "Father, the King of Heaven annoints you to the patriarchal House [g125], which is a second Jerusalem. Your elevated site is another Golgotha. And everything that came to pass in Jerusalem will occur here as well. It will be a dwelling in the midst of evils; its clerics will be more blessed than those of other lands. Now arise you and consecrate your churches."

**[46]** Having said this [the angel] vanished. At morning services the holy father, veiled, went up onto the *bema* and blessed the altar and the temple. While he was performing the consecration, bands of winged angels were at the altar crying out "Amen." The congregation was so scared by this that they went outdoors. And thus did God glorify that place by the hand of the venerable father Giwt and K'ristosase'r. Some 500 brothers were settled there, 200 in the monastery and 300 in the deserted caves and forest retreats, practising the most extreme asceticism. With their unending prayers they constituted a fiery column standing between earth and heaven. Now envious Satan was unable to endure all this and aroused a malicious grudge in the Persian king. He arose and came with 150,000 cavalry and reached that spot where he killed 10 clerics while the others fled. They even caught Father Giwt and those with him whom they took up on the rock and hurled over. However, by the grace of God, he was not harmed. Then [the Persian soldiers] grabbed him once more [g126] and wanted to throw him down again. But they were struck blind. Half of them died, seeing which the rest of the troops turned and fled.

The clerics assembled at the church, weeping and kissing the dead [clerics], and buried them on the eastern side of the church, where the main gate is. Then the blessed Giwt sent some brethren to Anastas, the bishop of Goght'n, and to his family, and called them to come and see. Overjoyed, they came to Giwt's monastery. At this time his mother had become blind. Taking her son's letter, she placed it over her eyes, and she could see again. She greatly thanked God. The blessed father and the brothers in front of him arose then and consecrated the church with great thanksgiving and entrusted [the bishop] with the church. And he gave each year the catch of fish from the Arax River for an eight-day period. Such was the friendship he displayed to the bishop of Goght'n, who then returned home. After some days they baptized the brother's son of that same Persian king, who was named Abl-Abas. And they made him an in-law of Vach'agan, the Aghuan king. They built a fortress on the bank of the river so that he might live there and defend the clerics. Now Abl-Abas and Vach'agan requested of the prince of Siwnik' that he alter the boundaries, giving to the monastery five villages. These five villages and all their borders included the area from Sewusar [g127] down to Bot'ibot'er where the T'zeni River is and the leprosarium's vineyards are, and from there to the bend of the Aghawni River across from the Nakorzan church and then to the House of God. The estate was further enriched with 1,000 cattle, 12,000 sheep, 700 camels, 600 horses, 400 asses, and 170 vineyard workers.

[47] Kings Vach'agan and Abl-Abas died in Barkushat. Now when Vr'am-Shapuh's grandson learned about this, he came suddenly with many troops and unexpectedly entered the monastery in the morning and killed some clerics. The most senior of them were bound, the church was demolished and levelled, and the stones were thrown into the river. In the middle of the night an angel descended and freed the bound [clerics]. Terrified, [the enemy] fled. In the morning the brethren assembled and wept with great lamentation over the church, and put to rest the [slain] brothers. Then they set about building a House of God even more splendid than the previous one. Six hundred brothers assembled and built a church elsewhere, giving it [the name of] Manakk. The new monastery was called by this same name. They also designated a place for the leprosarium and generously saw to its needs, which were provided by the monastery. Father Yovhanne's came from Kapan and, taking the brethren, went to the banks of the river. And he beseeched the Lord [g128] to provide fish for the needs of the brethren. A luminous man appeared to him in a vision walking along the bank of the river. He had a fishing rod suspended over the water, and at its tip myriads of fish arose. He himself taught [Yovhanne's] how to fish.

It was in this way that the monastery was graced with fish from the river. Now at 84, the blessed father Giwt was full of years. K'ristosase'r saw a vision and arose and went to tell the father. [In the vision he had seen] the monastery surrounded by crows. [K'ristosase'r said:] "They came and settled on my head, then they went and perched on your head. Then white doves came and perched on my head and then they flew and perched on your head." When the holy father heard this, he realized that the hour of his decease had arrived. Now with great encouragement he insisted on this and told K'ristosase'r not to fear, and to hasten to reach the Kingdom above. Taking food, they circulated around the retreats, feeding [the monks]. [48] Greeted and blessed by them, they went singing psalms via Maxaghatap' toward the monastery. They saw a multitude of horsemen approaching. They hastened toward the church and washed themselves in the fountain. Then they entered the church and kissed the holy altar, saluting it and weeping. The troops had surrounded the church. They entered, searching for Giwt and K'ristosase'r [g129]. [The latter] came forward, showing themselves. [The soldiers] seized and bound them, took them to Golgotha and threw them down. The first time there was no injury, but the second time Father Giwt's skull was split. As his soul was about to be released, he cried out to K'ristosase'r: "Hurry my son, and hasten after me." And then they killed K'ristosase'r on that rock, with a sword.

These holy men were martyred on the 15th day of the month of *K'aghots'* [fifth month of the moveable calendar]. At this time a thick cloud enveloped the monastery for six hours. When the infidels saw this, they were seized with a great fear and they fled, trembling. The dispersed brethren gathered and, with the greatest mourning and weeping, took up the bodies of the father and K'ristosase'r. Making their graves invisible, [the

clerics buried] Giwt in the church's portico, while K'ristosase'r was buried inside the church. This marvellous account was narrated to us by Yovhanne's, the sexton of the blessed covenant. For 25 years he had not gone outside the church, nor had he talked with anyone, except during the service. May Christ be reconciled with us through his intercession, and may He give peace and prosperity to the land [g130].

---

[49]

## 22.

### ***Concerning the Bishops of Siwnik' Makar and Petros, Gigan and Vrtane's.***

The venerable Erits'ak occupied the episcopal throne for one year and then passed to the Upper City, whose wall is made of jasper and ruby, whose doors are made of transparent crystal, and whose mayor is Christ. All the legions of saints are gathered there. [Erits'ak] was succeeded by that most worthy man of God, Makar, for 28 years. [Makar] was succeeded by the most praiseworthy, most exceptional of men, Petros, who was a student of the *k'ert'oghayr* ["Father of Philology/Literature," namely Movse's Xorenats'i], [he was] a celebrated rhetorician and an invincible philosopher, full of wisdom and perfect in virtue, first among the *vardapets* of the Armenians, philologist and translator. He made numerous translations and gave brilliant homilies about the birth of Christ, against the Chalcedonians, and on many other topics. He also explained obscure and difficult passages in the Old and New Testaments.

[Bishop Petros] had been ordained by Nerse's, *kat'oghikos* of the Armenians during the *marzpanate* of Vahan Mamikonean. He was the ninth bishop of Siwnik'. [Petros] was asked many intelligent questions by Vach'agan, king of the Aghuans, concerning complex [doctrinal] topics and he responded by providing very agreeable and correct solutions. He went with other *vardapets* [g131], Mambre', Eznik, Koriwn, and Dawit to the imperial city of Constantinople where they participated in the Council of Chalcedon, battling mightily against the slanderers [of orthodoxy], defeating and stopping all their mouths in shame. Then they returned to the land of the Armenians, triumphantly and in sound doctrine. And they confirmed everyone in the orthodox faith of the three blessed councils, with the orthodoxy inherited from Saint Gregory.

[50] [Petros] went to the first council of Dvin which took place at the order of *kat'oghikos* Nerse's and dealt with the obstinate Nestorians [or, the Khuzastan-inspired Nestorians]. The latter had congregated at the monastery of Manachihr R'azhik and began to propagate their disgusting and loathesome sect. They were pulled apart and scattered here and there, and by a great canon were excluded from all ties with us and separated [from us] with frightful anathemas. [Petros] witnessed the diminution of the truth and the fragmentation and near division of the throne of Saint Gregory. This was because the two sides, Byzantine and Persian, added a confessional [element] to their [mutual] hostility. The Byzantines wanted to establish a counter see—as, in fact, they did soon after. Movse's was occupying the throne of Saint Gregory at Dvin and a certain Yovhan was *kat'oghikos* in Theodosiopolis [Karin/Erzerum]. He came and placed his throne in the village of Aramo'nk' in [the district of] Kotayk'. Afterwards [g132], Abraham ruled as the sole *kat'oghikos*. It was because of such contention that the blessed Petros stood back from this noise and disorder and took ordination and chrism from Aghuania, until the disturbance calmed down. This, indeed, is what transpired.

After occupying the [*kat'oghikosal*] throne for 10 years, [Petros] died. After him the throne was occupied by Lord Gigan for three years, then by that venerable student of Petros, the blessed Vrdane's. It was because of the blessed Petros' order that he did not submit to the compromised [ecclesiastical] throne of the Armenians and instead went to the Aghuans to their wonderful *kat'oghikos* Lord Zak'aria, by order of the lord and chief prince of Siwnik', Mihr-Artashir. And it was from [Zak'aria] that [Vrdane's] received episcopal ordination. From year to year they received the oil of anointing from [Aghuania] until Abraham, *kat'oghikos* of the Armenians, ruled alone and the conflict ended. It was to him [to Vrdane's] that the blessed *kat'oghikos* and

patriarch of the Armenians Lord Yovhanne's wrote a letter about orthodoxy and caution regarding the Chalcedonians. Here is a copy of [that letter] [g133].

[51]

---

## 23.

### ***The letter written by Lord Yovhanne's, kat'oghikos of the Armenians, and other bishops to Lord Vrdane's, bishop of Siwnik'.***

To my beloved brother Lord Vrdane's, bishop of Siwnik', who is made radiant by Christ, and is our colleague and to the lord of Siwnik', Mihr-Artashir, the magnificent and glorious. Greetings with blessings and spiritual love from Yovhanne's, *kat'oghikos* of the Armenians, Abraham, bishop of Taron and of the Mamikoneans, Nerse's, bishop of Basean and Mardaghi, Mashtots', bishop of the Xorxor'unik', Giwt, bishop of Vanand, from Abdishoy, and from Bab, bishop of the Amatunik'.

You personally know about the unbelievable dangers which have now come into our land. From our venerable fathers and their successors we have received the true faith as preached by the prophets and apostles. [This was the faith] taught by true teachers such as Saint Gregory, successor of Saint Thaddeus, and by the 318 bishops who assembled in the city of Nicaea, the 150 who assembled in Constantinople, and the 200 who assembled at Ephesus. It was through the inspiration of the Holy Spirit that these men taught us from the start [g134] what the Lord Himself had said to his *vardapets* and students: "Go, teach all the pagans, and baptise them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit." With that, He placed a wonderful and sublime seal upon it all. The land of the Armenians adhered to this true faith unanimously without any contamination, and we lived in the bosom of the catholic Church, under the protection of the Cross of our Lord Jesus Christ in profound peace. But in the time of Nestorius, when he, with his wicked heresy, blinded Khuzastan [S.W. Iran/Elam] that leaven of malice, which had been hidden in the hearts of the unclean, also appeared here in our land. These people began to confuse the true and pure doctrine of the Holy Trinity, and mislead weak minds by the seductions of the flesh. Doubt spread, and many became sick from this horrific disease.

[52] We are unable to endure this malicious and bitter blasphemy. And so we—along with other bishops from the land of the Armenians including the venerable Petros, your bishop, and priests from the congregation of the blessed Church and from the monasteries, the nobles (*azatk'*) and the entire orthodox community— assembled in the blessed churches and by mutual agreement [g135] drove from our holy churches with anathemas the loathsome Nestorians, the Chalcedonians, and other heretics. And we made a commitment before the blessed and glorious altar and the life-giving Gospel and the blessed Cross of salvation, to completely distance ourselves from communication/communion with them, and not to hear their death-bringing words. Now we have learned from reliable folk that many loathsome Nestorians are dwelling in your land and that you receive them into your blessed Church and commune with them, ignoring the great labor and effort expended by your Saint Gregory equally on our land and on yours [and ignoring] the second birth which you experienced in the blessed [baptismal] font, and the radiant and true faith which we and you together have shared and share now, and the spiritual love which we have for you above all others.

We are concerned that you should remove the poisonous weeds from the good seed. We have therefore sent to you Matt'e'os, a faithful priest of our convent. We beseech you in the name of Jesus Christ our God, now and forever to remain, as you were, a blessed community, a people devoted to the Lord God, you and your children strengthened by His strength and His power. Don now the armor [g136] of God, the holy and true faith you have received from Saint Gregory and other venerable spiritual fathers. Keep it in you, firm and

unshakable. Anathematise the impure Nestorius and all other heretics living in your land and [worshipping] in your Church and entirely refuse them communion, with curses. Command all the orthodox not to participate in any of their foul activities, nor to listen to their seductive, wicked, and fatal words. For the holy Apostle described them as "accursed children," and their ruinous doctrines as rainless clouds accompanying a whirlwind of destruction, withered trees which produce no fruit, materials to be destroyed in eternal fire. It is with justice that they are cursed because now they are befouling the Church of Christ God everywhere.

[53] Indeed, the blessed Apostle called them false brethren, evildoers, and antichrists who have appeared in the world. Therefore did the Evangelist John command those of us adhering to the truth faith neither to admit them into our homes, nor to greet them, but rather to distance ourselves completely from them as though from the enemies of Christ's Cross. We pray that the Holy Trinity will curb them [g137]—these enemies and opponents of the truth faith—and will strengthen Its servants and those who worship Its blessed name. Now, should any of the heretics repent, and with full will turn to our true faith—that is, without deceit, and by cursing the foul Nestorius and all the heretics and Theodoret and the Council of Chalcedon in writing—they should be received as penitents. For the door of God's mercy is always open to those who confess their sins and repent.

---

## 24.

### ***Concerning the day on which the Armenian Era was established; and about when the [doctrinal formulation] "Who Was crucified" was introduced.***

[It happened that] in the fourth year of the patriarchate of Lord Movse's, *kat'oghikos* of the Armenians, and in the tenth year of the *marzpanate* of Armenia of Mzhe'zh Gnunik' which was the year 553 of Christ, there was completed the two hundredth year of Andreas. In that year the completion of the feast of Easter fell on March 25th, whereas initially it fell on April 4th. For this reason they were unable to return to [this method for calculation] because after the 25th, the next date was April 13th [g138]. Moreover, 9 lunar intervals were missing. As a result, [the correct dating of] all the annual festivals was awry and matters became confused.

[54] Thus it became necessary to establish an Armenian system of dating, to correct this doubtful state of affairs. The learned E'as with other Armenian sages therefore addressed this ten-year [discrepancy] and established an accurate 500-year cycle. A great assembly was held in the city of Dvin when this was initiated. Participating in the assembly were the bishop of Siwnik', Lord Vrdane's, and the prince Lord Mihr-Artashir. They were accompanied by learned *vardapets*, who were preeminent among the *vardapets* of the Armenians. Thus did they correct the calendar. Now in the same gathering they adopted the [doctrinal formulation] "Holy God, Who Was crucified" against Chalcedonian and Nestorian teachings. In this period there was crucified in the city of Dvin that great martyr of Christ, the venerable neomartyr Maxozh the Persian. At baptism he had been renamed Yiztbuzit, which translates "God given." Along with him, and of the same lineage, Sahak, Samue'l and Ye"ze"mxuast died as martyrs [g139].

---

## 25.

### ***The death of Vrdane's and the succession of Grigor and K'ristap'or; and what stories there were from their days.***

In the days of Lord Vrdane's, bishop of Siwnik', some Nestorians and Chalcedonians came and deceitfully settled in the lands of Sisakan and Aghuania. Now hearing the warning letters of Lord Yovhanne's [about

them] and becoming acquainted with those who had hidden themselves under the straw, Lord Vrdane's was alarmed and began to persecute them to leave his diocese. Moreover, with great anathemas he stipulated that [people] should not dare allow them in their borders. And thus, with true doctrine and virtuous behavior [Vrdane's] occupied the metropolitan throne for 23 years, and then passed away. Then the throne was held by Lord Grigor for 15 years, he who had received ordination from the Aghuans. [Following him came] the glorious and venerable K'ristap'or who also received his ordination from the Aghuans. After the death of [kat'oghikos] Movse's [II, Eghivardets'i, 574-604], Vrdane's *k'ert'ogh* ["the philologist"] served as *locum tenens* for 3 years. Now since there was no [ruling] prince among the Armenians after the death of Mzhe'zh [Gnuni], Persian ("*tachik*") *marzpan*s ruled the Armenians for 36 years, and, as a result, the [ecclesiastical] throne was unoccupied. Then Vasak's son, Vard Mamikonean, rebelled from the Persians and submitted to the Byzantines [g140].

[55] Then all the Armenians in the two sectors—in the Byzantine sector and in the Persian sector—united, and the bishops and monastics gathered in Dvin. They wanted to seat a *kat'oghikos*, however, they did not succeed on this occasion. Therefore K'ristap'or, the metropolitan of Siwnik', united the assembly and they set canons and made Church decisions. Now the next year, during Lent, the assembly again gathered in Dvin and, on Palm Sunday, seated as patriarch of the Armenians Abraham, bishop of the R'shtunik' [Abraham I Aghbat'anets'i, 607-615]. [55] With this, the separated throne of Siwnik' reattached itself to the supreme dignity of the throne of Saint Gregory and now his successor, Lord Abraham. However in this period there were numerous disturbances and conflicts among the episcopacies of the Byzantines, Iberians/Georgians, and the Armenians. There were misunderstandings, divisions, and confusion in the ecclesiastical regulations, sometimes over the Council of Chalcedon, sometimes concerning the nine orders of the clergy, sometimes it was due to the arrogance of the Iberians trying to rule over the Aghuans—which made the Aghuans turn to the Armenians. [Also disturbing this period] was the pridefulness of the bishop of Mardpetakan, who was removed from the [clerical] dignity. Consequently, numerous meetings and rigorous examination of Scriptural testaments [took place] and [g141] peace was finally—barely—brought to the Armenian Church. I shall briefly summarize the facts and causes of these developments, as I promised, relying on the accurate [writings] of the blessed Uxtane's, bishop of Sebastia, the letter of blessed Solomon, leader of the Mak'enots' [monastery] which we found in the middle volume of the *History of the Aghuans*, and from the letter of the blessed Mashtots' written at the request of the *kat'oghikos* Lord Ge'org. From these three trustworthy *vardapets*' [works] I will reveal to you everything I have promised.

---

[56]

## 26.

***Regarding the unity of the Armenians and the sole rule of Lord Abraham; about the great assembly which took place in Dvin; about the nine classes [of clergy] in the Church; and about the separation of the Iberians/Georgians [from the Armenian Church]. [In this chapter are] many useful accounts which we collected from old letters and from the writings of Uxt'ane's [including narrations] about the archbishopric of the Aghuans, the metropolitanate of Siwnik', and how it came about that the Cross of Siwnik' was bestowed.***

During the reign of Xosrov, king of kings [of Persia], and [during the reign] of Justinian the autocrat emperor [of Byzantium] and during the reign as prince of Smbat [g142] Bagratuni, who was called *marzpan* of the land of Hyrcania (Vrkan), when Vrdane's *k'ert'ogh* ["the philologist"] was serving as *locum tenens* of the [kat'oghikos] throne of the Armenians, and during the lordship of Prince Sahak of Siwnik', a synod of Armenian bishops was convened in Dvin by the order of Smbat and with the consent of the other Armenian

princes. Attending also were those dissidents in the Byzantine sector whose chief was Manase', bishop of Basen and K'ristap'or of Siwnik. And they made an oath of unity. Smbat, the *marzpan* of Hyrcania who had requested [the meeting] took their written document and sealed it with his signet ring and deposited it in the blessed church. Then, through inspiration from On High, they selected Abraham, bishop of R'shtunik', and designated him as *kat'oghikos* of the Armenians. Now in this period, the wicked heresy of Chalcedon became inflamed through the agency of the autocrat emperor of Byzantium. Like a cancer, he wanted to infect our land of Armenia and the orthodox Syrians with it. This was especially so during the reign of Maurice [582-602]. Thus envoys and negotiators from Byzantium were ceaselessly going back and forth, and they frequently ordered meetings convened, once in Constantinople and three times in Theodosiopolis [Karin/Erzerum] in an atmosphere of serious, heated, and substantial inquiry. As it happened, during this period learning had been renewed and was in a flourishing condition, while the Greek language and literature [g143] were very well known. And thus whatever they were asked, they responded to even more [eloquently]. Consequently, some slandered the blessed father Yovhan Mayragomet'i for [supposedly] saying that the Armenians had been defeated in matters of the faith—which did not and will not happen. The truth is reflected in the writings of Solomon, abbot of the blessed congregation of Mak'enots' and leader, who made inquiry of the *kat'oghikos*. Here is how he put it: "Yovhan testified that the Armenians were unbeaten in matters of doctrine, while in the other matter they were soundly defeated and kept silent. The Byzantines claimed that God had established the Church with nine classes [of clergy] as in Heaven, while on Earth, with great skill and wisdom, He established four [ecclesiastical] thrones, after the four evangelists, who are the patriarchs, and whose king is the Divine Word Itself, enthroned above them. The entire world is obedient to these thrones. Beneath them are the eight classes of clergy. So, which is your throne and your patriarch, and to which is your archbishop subordinate? and so on. Either you [Armenians] must show the one [acceptable structure] you have, or—if you lack it—you must subordinate yourselves to one of the existing four thrones. Otherwise, you are absolute heretics and devoid of all divine Grace" [g144].

[57] This is where the Armenians were badly defeated. And it was in vain that they recalled the old rules, because these things which were previously obscure and unknown, had fallen into disuse, and there was also lack of attention [to these matters] from the holders of the [episcopal] thrones. Now when the Armenians had returned from there, they held consultations including the bishops, princes, and the senior *tanute'rs*, to come up with some means of resolving the doubtful issues. An order was issued throughout the entire land to convene a great assembly. This was in the reign of the Persian king Xosrov Aprve'z, and of the Byzantine [emperor] Maurice [582-602]. This synod was under the chairmanship and primacy of the bishop of Siwnik', Dawit', and [of the bishop] of Basen, Manase'. For K'ristap'or, after occupying the episcopate for 10 years, had died and in his place sat Lord Dawit', who had been ordained by *Kat'oghikos* Abraham.

First they confirmed the blessed Three Councils as orthodox and unanimously anathematized Chalcedon and the [Tome of] Leo. Then they all signed a declaration of the faith and sealed it with the signet rings of Lord Abraham and of the other bishops and princes. They dared to do this for the following reason. During Justinian's reign, [the emperor] had assembled his grandee see holders and requested an order from the blessed fathers to transfer the see of John [g145] the Evangelist from Ephesus to Constantinople, though the original one remained there, [and they transferred the see] of the Evangelist Matthew from Antioch to Jerusalem. After this all the rulers and grandees grew arrogant to the point that all places where an apostle had died declared themselves to be autonomous episcopal sees. Here too, following them, they declared the *kat'oghikos* of the Armenians, Abraham, a patriarch, [the *kat'oghikos*] of the Aghuans, an archbishop, and [the *kat'oghikos*] of the Iberians/Georgians, a metropolitan. As for Siwnik', it now rejoined [the Armenians], for previously, at the order of Petros, for some time, it had stood back because of contention over the [kat'oghikos] throne. Now the Iberians waxed arrogant over the Aghuans, since they did not want to belong to a subordinate class. And they claimed that Iberia/Georgia had precedence over Aghuania in the [initial spreading of the] faith. Their leader in this was Kiwrion who was steeped in Nestorius' heresy, but [he held these beliefs] secretly, not in the open. This [disclosure] could wait for another time and situation. He had

with him a *Xuzhik* [a resident of Khuzestan and/or a Nestorian], whom he himself had ordained as bishop. [Kiwriion] had been the sexton of the blessed cathedral at Vagharshapat. He had gone for his deaconship to Colonea and dwelled there with a diophysite cleric. And thus he became stained with the heresy.

[58] Now it came about that when the Iberians asked Movse's, *kat'oghikos* of the Armenians, for a leader, he ordained that precursor of the antichrist, Kiwriion, and gave him to them. As soon as [g146] the Aghuans heard about such an elevation for the Iberians, they, too, represented that a certain individual named Eghishe' [Elisha/Eliseus] had come to Aghuania as an apostle [to preach Christianity] even earlier than among the Armenians, that he had built a church, and had ordained a bishop. For a while, [the Aghuans] also turned from the Armenians. The Iberians, too, split away using the Aghuans as a pretext, because [Kiwriion's] request for an archbishop had been refused by Abraham. Despite the fact that through the agency of Bishop Petros many times had [Kiwriion] requested and even been promised this, [Abraham] did not consent. At last Abraham excommunicated him. Then, removing his cowl and mantle, [Kiwriion] gave them to Petros, saying: "Take what is yours." However, after this [Kiwriion] had doubts and secretly sent [some men] after him who killed Petros and two deacons clandestinely on Kangra Mountain. But information about [Kiwriion's] heresy was revealed by Movse's, the bishop of Ts'urtaw—which is Gach'eank'—a theme which today is subject to Haghabat.

While events were thus unfolding, they gave the metropolitanate of Mardpetakan to Bishop T'e'odoros. However, he, too, became brazen and requested that bishops should be under his jurisdiction. The Armenians were frightened that this might lead to further divisions, and so they took [the dignity of metropolitan] away from him. [The Armenians], observing that the [spiritual] lords of Siwnik' were imbued with sound, orthodox doctrine, and were prominent throughout all Armenia, and that the first fathers had granted them such an honor, the united assembly thought it proper [g147] to give the metropolitanate to them. [59] In this, [the metropolitan of Siwnik'] would sit on the same cushion and throne and at the same table as the *kat'oghikos*. Then they designated Dawit' as the metropolitan of Siwnik', giving him a banner with a cross which was to be carried before him at all times, and they allowed him, at the blessed altars in his own churches, to mention the *kat'oghikos* of the Armenians, not as *kat'oghikos*, but merely by his name. Furthermore, in correspondence, the spiritual lords of Siwnik' did not refer to the *kat'oghikos* as head of the bishops or with any other title except "the divinely honored spiritual lord." They [referred to themselves] as "servants." [This was so] except during the tenure as *kat'oghikos* of Eghia, whose revolt at Erit'u monastery [caused the clerics of Siwnik'] to become obedient to the Aghuans. Then they did not use [the expressions] "servants" or "spiritual lord."

Behold, this was the result of the jealousy of the Byzantines who attempted to reduce the diocese of Thaddeus and to extinguish the throne of Saint Gregory, [which they wanted to accomplish] by separating out nine classes of the clergy. [In this scenario], the Armenians had a patriarchate, the Aghuans, an archbishopric, and the people of Siwnik', a metropolitanate. Now the historian Yovhannē's [John Drasxanakertts'i] notes that Melitene and Sebastia also had become metropolitanates. Other areas as well abandoned the previous arrangements, so that there would not be additional discord. They asked of Siwnik' also that they not seek additional [rights], not have bishops under [the metropolitan] and not ordain bishops [g148], and that they be distinguished only by throne and cross, and that they call the [Armenian] patriarch the occupant of the first throne, which is *protofrontes*. Their [head] was styled metropolitan. Thus it was the second time that they were graced with such an honor and symbol. The first time this had happened was during the reign of Esvaghe'n, king of Aghuania; the second time was by Lord Abraham during this assembly of the Armenians.

[60] And now, O you who love reading, I have abbreviated for you only some [material] of which there is a great deal, to demonstrate how things were. If you want to hear about it more fully and at length, then read Uxtane's and the *History of the Aghuans*, and inform yourself from writings in the *Book of Letters* and [in particular] what Lord Mashtots' wrote at the request of Ge'org, Armenia's *kat'oghikos*. After a good deal of reading and examining a variety of documents, and after much effort, I found the verifiable [information on

this topic] and described it here. Consequently, I did not put down a detailed description but rather provided a general and broad outline to keep the composition clear. You may accept it with complete certitude and without any doubt as to its validity.

---

## 27.

### ***Regarding the nine orders of the clergy, what they are and how they perform.***

When the Word of God came and assumed human form, our human essence [g149] was freed from bondage to Satan. It was illuminated by the heavenly Gospel and, through rebirth in the baptismal font, was adopted by the heavenly Father. [God] granted and generously gave to humanity His body which partakes of the ineffable spirits of the fire and air, and His blood as food so that we may unite with God and become divine. He called humanity to a heavenly priesthood, which gives them the divine power to bind and loose, in heaven and on earth, and, finally, he adorned our nature with an indescribable grace and glory. For that reason He has built and strengthened the Holy Church, making heaven on earth. Now in order that we, the children of the earth, may become heavenly beings, it was necessary that the order of heaven be established on the earth and be arranged for the eternal glorification of God.

Here is how that happened. To establish the heavenly patterns on the earth, it was appropriate to organize the Church like the celestial hierarchy, with its regulations, according to three degrees of chief priests and nine orders [of the priesthood], prescribed and determined in this manner by the Apostles and patriarchs, under the inspiration and divine providence of the Holy Spirit. It was done in this manner:

The first class of the Church [g150], which is close to the divine, is composed of the patriarchs who recline on the four thrones of the Evangelists. They wear the round apostolic mantle with five double palliums. It is their job to ordain archbishops for the four regions of the world, and they also may convene regional [ecclesiastical] assemblies.

Archbishops compose the second [ecclesiastical] class. **[61]** They are the chief bishops [and from their ranks] are chosen the *kat'oghikoi*. They wear a cloak which extends to the heels and is covered with crosses with four palliums over it. Their job is to ordain the metropolitans and to bless the divine chrism. On the death of a patriarch, three archbishops with the participation of other clerical classes ordain the [new] patriarch.

The third ecclesiastical order is that of the metropolitans. They are the overseers of monastic complexes ("capital cities") and the senior thrones. Their vestment is a mantle which has on it as many crosses as they have archbishops under them. These are dark-colored crosses on linen. They wear three palliums over this cloak. It is their duty to ordain bishops and to consecrate oil which the Church uses for the needs of the catechumens and the sick and, if they choose, to augment this oil with the holy apostolic chrism. Where applicable, or if there is no patriarch, or in any other very serious situations, the metropolitans may, by order [g151] of the great thrones and with the assistance of clergy, consecrate an archbishop.

The fourth order of the clergy consists of bishops who are [also] known as visitants, who have authority over the districts. They wear a crossless mantle and only a double pallium. It is their duty to ordain priests and deacons and to bless the church, to consecrate the altar and the baptismal font. However, they receive the chrism from the great sees via their metropolitan. The metropolitan, in turn, receives it from his archbishop. Thus [the chrism] by Divine Grace descends from the top by degrees, from the patriarch all the way down to the lowest level, the laity.

The fifth order consists of presbyters, that is, the priests. They wear a chasuble and a stole covering both shoulders, and have the right to wear a tunic on the bema. Their duties include preparing the life-giving mystery of communion and distributing it to the worthy; baptisms; blessing the Cross; and, as stipulated for Christians, hearing confessions of the dying and of sinners and offering forgiveness. Within their own flock they may also lay on strictures and then remove them. However, they may not dare to move the chrism. Now ordinary oil which the metropolitans and bishops bless [the priests may move], but the apostolic chrism may be transported only by a bishop. Once a year [the latter] circulates around the district and anoints those who have been ordained [g152] by the priests. [The priest] may make children into lecters and [psalm] singers, and set terms for penitents and deaconesses.

[62] The sixth ecclesiastical grade consists of the *sarkawags* or servitors, otherwise known as deacons. They wear a long tunic without insignias and a stole over the left shoulder, and are bare-headed. They serve the priests on the blessed bema and at the altar. Their duties include reading the Gospel and preaching, censuring, and attending at the divine mystery. They hold the chalice and the plate. There are also women deacons who preach in the female monasteries. Their clothing is that of the nuns. They wear a mantle, a cross on the forehead, a small cape which extends a way down the right arm, and a belt. They may ascend the bema and preach and read the Gospel, but not [addressing] the assembly from the bema. Rather they do this in a separate area or some corner. However, they must not engage in serving [during] the divine mystery, as the male deacons do.

The seventh grade of the Church consists of the scribes (*dpirk'*), who are half-deacons wearing the vestments of deacons, but with the cape on the left forearm, nor do they wear a belt. Their duties include reading the Church's Apostolic writings, bearing candles and staffs bearing a cross, and seeing to the church doors.

The eighth [g153] rank of the clergy consists of the *anaganosk'* who are the readers. They wear the same vestments [as the scribes], the mantle, but no cape. Outside the church they wear only a linen robe and are bare headed. It is their duty to read the writings of the prophets and the doctors of the Church.

The ninth grade of the clergy consists of psalmists, singers of psalms. They wear the same vestments and cowl as the others. It is their responsibility to sing psalms in the church and to keep the melody and to do everything else that relates to the art of music, the allelulias and *mesed*, and so on.

Behold, these are the nine grades of the clergy which the Holy Spirit designated through the agency of the blessed apostles and their successors the holy patriarchs. The Church must have all of them without exception and in no way should any [grade] be absent. God is displeased if any one of them is missing, and [such an absence] would cause a lessening of Divine Grace. Indeed, consider the Church as an assemblage of members forming a body, whose head is Christ. If there are missing limbs, or if some are too small, this mutilated body would displease Christ as the head. Now, my brother, consider this and see what the nature of the damage would be. All these orders of the Church may, by unanimous consent, elect the patriarch.

[63]

---

## 28.

***Concerning Mat'usaghay, bishop of Siwnik', and about the assembly at Karin [convened during the time] of Heraclius; and about Ezr, who was steeped in the Chalcedonian heresy.***

The venerable father and diligent ascetic Lord Dawit' held the metropolitan throne of Siwnik' for 27 years and then died. Subsequently, as *locum tenens* the great author (*k'ert'ogh* "poet," "philologist," "grammarian") and

invincible philosopher Mat'usaghay occupied that throne. This Mat'usaghay had been raised in all piety and was adorned with every virtue. He had studied literature (*k'ert'oghut'iwn*) and been trained by rhetoricians. He had delved deeply into the study of philosophy and was full of all types of learning and knowledge. He was a great individual who occupied the first rank among the *vardapets* of the Armenian see of Siwnik', and he became head and director of all the *vardapets* of the Armenians by pursuing the types of translational and interpretational activities long ago ordered by the blessed Sahak and Mesrob. And so it was that when the gleaming rays of knowledge were observed pouring from the venerable Mat'usaghay, nourished and trained in the same House, they elevated him to the rank of doctor of the Church. And then he was seated at the head of all the *vardapets* [g155] in the awe-inspiring magisterial pulpit from which flowed like a river streams of divine wisdom, enriching all students.

The blessed patriarch, Komitas, was greatly struck by [Mat'usaghay's] reputation. Thus he bypassed all the *vardapets* at the *kat'oghikosate* and also the Armenian *vardapets'* establishment at Arsharunik'—where the clerical rhetoricians and savants of the Armenians assembled—the one at Eraxadzor which is now called *Vardik hayr*, and sent his brother's son, T'e'odoros, who had been raised in piety by him with great care and love, to Mat'usaghay, Siwnik's *k'ert'ogh*. The latter took him and carefully taught him, bringing him to the apex of learning, both in theoretical and practical subjects.

[64] When Lord Komitas the patriarch of the Armenians died, he was laid to rest in a tomb in the church he had built close to the resting place of the blessed Hr'ip'simeans. Then Lord K'ristap'or, who was from a noble House, occupied the throne for three years. He was succeeded by Ezr, from the village of P'ar'azhnaert in the district of Nig, who brought darkness into the Church, for 10 years. In the third year of [Ezr's] *kat'oghikosate*, Dawit' Sahar'uni died. Then T'e'odoros R'shtuni held the *marzpanate* of Armenia and, [during his tenure,] Emperor Heraclius issued an order [g156] that the lands of the Armenians and the Syrians should assemble [their head clerics] in the city of Karin/Erzerum for an investigation of the faith. He himself, taking along Byzantine rhetoricians, went there as well. Then Prince T'e'odoros R'shtuni conferred with the other Armenian lords and with *Kat'oghikos* Ezr, and he told them:

"We [lords] will now quickly go there in service to the emperor. Select learned men of our people and come to the meeting with the bishops of the Armenians. However, in no way stir from this place without Mat'usaghay of Siwnik' and Yovhann's Mayragomets'i, lest the beautiful structure of our faith be demolished. Oh, Lord *Kat'oghikos*, the day of our battle and triumph, the longed-for day of our salvation is upon us. Gird yourself like a true man, arm yourself with the security of our faith, so that in the meeting with the Byzantines we are not defeated by deceitful orators, and not robbed and deprived of our orthodox faith."

The *kat'oghikos* sent as messengers to Mat'usaghay some respect worthy men, and acquainted him with developments including the imminent danger, and he called upon him so that together they could concern themselves with what would be appropriate. However, [Mat'usaghay] did not want to disturb the routine at the seminary and his great ascetic practises morning and evening, and so he did not go. A second time he was entreated to go. But he did not accept, arguing [g157] physical infirmity. He sent to him the aforementioned T'e'odoros, his student, and Komitas' brother's son, and he wrote a letter on the faith which is in the *Book of Feast-Days* (*To'nanamak*)—I myself put it there—which they could read and [see how] to respond [to the Chalcedonians] using it as an outline. And he begged them not to blame him for not going, saying: "You yourselves are learned enough and you have with you the eminent *vardapet* Yovhan and many other learned folk and rhetoricians/orators. Moreover, I have sent you our own student, T'e'odoros. That should suffice."

[65] But Ezr did not take Yovhan along with him. Rather, making bold to trust in T'e'doros, he went off to the meeting with Heraclius. When Heraclius asked him: "Why do you not unite with us in the faith?" Ezr replied: "Most gracious Emperor, if you wish that is a simple matter. Just reject the Council of Chalcedon and the

Tome of Leo and we will be united." Then the emperor took a copy of the declaration of the faith from the Council of Chalcedon, placed it on the blessed Cross which he had with him and said: "Behold, Lord *Kat'oghikos*, take, read, and examine [this], and if there is any corruption or shortcoming in it, show it to me. Then I will turn all of Byzantium to your confession and burn this document. Otherwise, accept it and adopt ours." And so, the *kat'oghikos* took the document to his lodging place, and they examined it for three days, but [g158] they were unable to detect the hidden and covert heresy it contained. They went to the emperor and said: "Oh, King, live forever! We have found no fault in this [statement of the faith]. Rather, in every respect it comports with the orthodox faith of our holy fathers." The emperor inquired: "Then you are now in agreement with us?" The *kat'oghikos* replied: "In this matter we are in agreement. However, what we do not accept is the fact that your clergy boldly engages in prostitution and other abominations, and takes communion carelessly." The emperor then said: "Our examination now is about matters of the faith and not about such [other] deeds. You Armenians have unnatural intercourse with men and animals and many others besides. Eliminate those [practises] from the Armenians and I will do the same among the Byzantines. The Council of Chalcedon did not establish the whorehouses or vermin you mention. It is for [preventing them] that princes have been designated, so that no unnatural evils should manifest themselves."

[66] The *kat'oghikos* quit the emperor's presence without replying. He conferred with the *aspet* and the other princes about what they should do. [Ezr] said: "We found no grounds [for conflict]." Transported into a rage, the *aspet* shouted: "Didn't I tell you not to come to this meeting without Mat'usaghay and Yovhane's? Now behold, through your ignorance you have ruined us!" Ezr replied: "Mat'usaghay would not come and Yovhan did not want to leave the church and the *kat'oghikos*ate. Furthermore, everyone said that 'since [g159] Mat'usaghay's pupil [T'e'odoros] is with you, there is no need for any of us others [to go with you]. What you have is enough.'" Then T'e'odoros spoke up, saying: "Why are you arguing and saddened? There is no flaw in their confession. Rather, we and they are one. They are the trunk and the root and we are a branch growing from them, taking [from them] the faith and all the orders of Christianity. We should not rebel from them and be detached from our roots. Rather, we as the juniors, should obey the orders of the seniors, and be together one flock with one shepherd."

These words resonated in the minds of the princes and bishops. Moreover, Ezr had his eye on worldly glory and greedy [expectations] from the emperor, and his mind had deviated from the truth. He focused on convincing the princes and bishops of his position. Now when they had heard [these words] from T'e'odoros, they went unitedly to the emperor and accepted Chalcedon. They had a mass and took communion together and agreed to the emperor's plan for unity. They requested [the canons of the Council of] Chalcedon from the emperor who gave it to them on parchment written in gold letters. [The emperor also gave] Ezr a third portion of the town of Koghb and all its salt mines. Oh, stupid and evil merchant! And thus with very great glory and noteworthy gifts did they depart from the emperor, returning to Dvin with their loot, stolen from the true faith [g160]. There they wanted to assemble to establish the new rules which they had taken. However, Yovhane's Mayragomets'i did not consent and, [as a result], he was disrespected and persecuted by Ezr. Then [Yovhane's] said: "You are aptly named *Ezr* ("limit," "edge") because you have become the limit and end of our orthodox faith." Now Mat'usaghay had come [to the meeting] from Siwnik' and was exceedingly troubled by the wicked developments. But at the time he was confounded, since the evil had been germinated by his own student.

[67] After many entreaties from the assembly and from Ezr, they managed to overcome his doubts, and he acquiesced to being ordained bishop of Siwnik'. And so they ordained him and sent him back to his throne and diocese with great gifts. [Mat'usaghay] exerted all his efforts to protect his diocese from becoming infected with the Chalcedonian heresy. Indeed, he vigorously maintained the orthodox faith, transmitted by the holy fathers and kept [here] from the time of Saint Gregory to the present, where, thanks to the Holy Spirit, it has been preserved. However, the Armenians (*Hayk'*) were in this very heresy during the reigns of six *kat'oghikoi*, for 85 years, until the time of that splendid and praiseworthy son of the Holy Church, Yovhan O'dznets'i

[A.D. 717-728]. It was he who undertook to cleanse the Armenians of this heresy and to restore [the faith]. Now the venerable Mat'usaghay occupied the metropolitanate of Siwnik' for 18 years and then passed from this world. He went to the Summoner, having accomplished many important virtuous deeds, in order to receive [g161] as his just reward that which the human ear has not heard, the human eye has not seen, and the human heart has not felt.

---

## 29.

***The letter of Mat'usaghay, bishop of Siwnik', which was written to Emperor Heraclius about the faith, at the order of Lord Ezr, kat'oghikos of the Armenians and other Armenian bishops.***

We omit the translation of this chapter (page g162 to the top of page g173 of the Classical Armenian text) which deals with doctrinal issues. We resume with chapter 30.

---

## 30.

***The bishops of Siwnik' who succeeded Lord Mat'usaghay the k'ert'ogh.***

After the venerable man Lord Mat'usaghay, the seat remained vacant for eight years due to the incessant incursions and disturbances caused sometimes by the Persians, sometimes by Greeks, and other times by the Huns. Then they selected a distinguished man, very virtuous and competent in Church matters, named Abraham, and he was placed on the episcopal throne of Siwnik'. After 30 years, he died. He was succeeded by Lord Yovse'p', a man having the qualities of goodness and virtue, for 19 years. Then [succeeded] Lord Yovhan, for 22 years, and Movse's, for seven years.

[68] [It was Movse's] who raised with great care the blessed Step'annos, scholar and martyr. [Then there followed as bishop of Siwnik'] Anania, for seven years, Hovhan nine years and finally Step'annos. [Step'annos was] the torch of the House of Torgom which turned into a sun. He was liked by everyone, a venerable and illustrious martyr, the praiseworthy first-born son of our glorious heaven-like [ecclesiastical] [g173] throne of Siwnik', which he ascended. He was a man in no way inferior to his predecessors, someone who may be compared to all other martyrs. As such, we must not overlook his eloquent speeches and the details of his virtuous actions. Rather, we shall mention them briefly in this book.

---

## 31.

***The works and death of Lord Step'annos of Siwnik', and what is related about him.***

Let us tell you in summary form what we have learned about Step'annos, the metropolitan of Siwnik', about his heavenly life, his enviable death, and the terrible retribution that followed his death. The emotions of my heart prompt my feelings and thoughts to weave a splendid song, like a Homeric hymn, to create a eulogy capable of delighting the ears of my readers. Let this, then, be a eulogy about that man of God [Step'annos], the incomparable, the wise, the rival of the seraphim, the scholar, and invincible rhetorician.

My words, which are weak and imperfect, are hopelessly incapable of describing the many merits of Step'annos, who was the pillar of the sky, the anchor [g174] of faith, the unshakable rock and fearless champion of the blessed Church. [He was] a heavenly man and an earthly angel, ever dying, ever alive,

causing the fiery spirits to admire him, and the cherubim to be astonished by him. I have little hope of adequately praising him with my weak and imperfect words. Instead, let me merely tell the stories about him. He was the son of the senior priest in Armenia's capital city of Dvin. He was trained and educated in the home of the *kat'oghikosate* of the Armenians. [69] After he had grown up, he did not want to hide the [spiritual] torch under the bushel of the physical body. Rather, he quit the populous city. [Step'annos] went into the famous and magnificent residence of Mak'enots', a retreat inhabited by an angelic flock of monks practising the holy virtues, the residence of God, led by the seraphic abbot father of fathers Solomon (Sagho'm) who was the *e'gonomos* of the holy monastery. Here [Step'annos] shone in the harsh austerity and the terrible rigors of his ascetic lifestyle. It was here in the year 150 of the Armenian Era (A.D. 701) that he compiled [a book known as] the *To'nakan* [which describes] the feasts of the Lord and ritual in honor of the martyrs. Here, too, he devoted himself to a life of great and constant piety and austerity practising a most difficult regime of virtue. After a few years, having perfected the inner man, [Step'annos] did not think of remaining in the darkness [g175] of ignorance, and tried to get schooling in holy theology. Just as two instruments, a plow and a wheel, are needed for farming work, so in this case too, for everything to be proper and correct, theory and practise must be yoked together. [To achieve his aim, Step'annos] left his retreat and hastened to that fountainhead of the learned in the *vardapetaran* of Siwnik', which stood at the head of all the learned in Armenia and illuminated the schools in it. [It did this] in the same way that the Athenians attained glory among the Romans and Greeks and was called the mother of learning, and Latin and Greek education in Spain [followed it]. It was the same way here in the House of Torgom in the land of the Armenians.

Step'annos went to Movse's, the venerable bishop of Siwnik', and became his student. And, in accordance with the rich endowments he had, he quickly became knowledgeable in theological learning. Endowed with an abundance of grace, [Step'annos] developed and matured richly and luxuriously and reached the apex of achievement, as he was filled with incomparable genius. Receiving an order from the bishop, he sat in the instructing pulpit/chair (*nstaw yambionn rabunakan*) and explained theological literature to students at the school. [70] When the venerable Movse's was dying, he entrusted [Step'annos] with oversight/trusteeship of the see. Afterwards, Step'annos went to Dvin [g176], to the *kat'oghikos*, and had him ordain Anania as bishop of Siwnik'. He himself stayed there at the *katoghikosate* and never stopped his practise of elucidating the writings of the Old and New Testaments. Now it happened that he had an argument about the faith with a diophysite prince who was the *aspet* of the Armenians, Smbat Bagratuni, and since he [Step'annos] was unskilled in secular philosophy, he was unable to convince the prince with his words. [Smbat Bagratuni] insulted Step'annos, calling him ignorant, and he wanted to persecute him. However, [Step'annos] secretly arose, disguised himself, and left the city, fleeing to the imperial city of Constantinople. Here he lived in a retreat with an orthodox monk who was learned in secular teachings. And here he studied the Greek and Latin languages and literatures day and night, the books and the art of the philosophical style. Now when *aspet* Smbat learned about this, he notified Emperor Leo that "there is a wicked person by the name of Step'annos residing with such and such a person. [This Step'annos], who insults your kingdom and curses your holy faith, was driven out by us."

When the emperor heard about this he was furious, and ordered that [Step'annos] be brought to court, as was done. However, the monk had advised him to say that he was a stateless foreigner who had come there [g177] to beg, and when the emperor asked, that is how he replied. The emperor's wrath subsided. He ordered that [Step'annos] be left alone. And so he dwelled freely in the city and went to St. Sophia; and he requested useful material from the repository/library and read it constantly. He also went to Athens and accumulated all sorts of knowledge there. Then he returned to the same city [of Constantinople]. Now it happened that he became acquainted with a great *consul* named David who was chief of the emperor's table. This man asked him to translate the beautiful book of Dionysius and to include a line by line explanation of difficult words. He also translated the sweet book of Gregory of Nyssa on nature and structure. He also became acquainted with Patriarch Germanus. Now it came about that on one of the Lord's feast days [Step'annos] had gone to church and was standing during the service, and it was requested that he take part in the service [or, take

communion]. However, he refused saying "I do not dare do that without the order of my [Armenian] patriarch." As a result of this incident the [Greek] patriarch became troubled about him and put many questions to him about the faith.

[71] Discerning his invincible wisdom, [the Greek patriarch] was astonished and wrote a letter to the Armenians concerning the faith—which begins with the words "Christ is our peace"—which he sealed with his signet ring and gave to Step'annos to take to Armenia [g178]. The renown of his learning had reached the emperor's ears. The latter summoned him and asked questions about the faith. [Step'annos] boldly replied: "Oh benevolent king, command that your book repositories be opened and that I may find there books which demonstrate the character of orthodox faith." [The emperor] immediately commanded that they be opened. There [Step'annos] located a book with a gold cover containing writing about the orthodox faith of the blessed Fathers, and he showed this to the emperor. The latter was overjoyed and delighted and asked: "Do you Armenians hold *this* faith?" [Step'annos] replied: "We do." Then the emperor said: "Go now to Rome and if, in the repositories of the great church, you can find three books like this one, I will convert the entire world to that faith." [Step'annos] was so overwhelmed with joy by this, that he regarded it as a divine intervention. He went to Rome where he found three other books whose contents were consistent with the first book. These books were Cyril's *Commentaries* and *Treasures/Canticles*, Athanasius of Alexandria's work, and third, the sayings of Epiphaneus. Taking these divine treasures, he was informed by his own soul that the emperor could not be trusted. Thus he did not go back [to Constantinople] from Rome. Rather, he traversed the boundless sea and finally reached Dvin. Here he saw the land wrecked and ruined by the Tachiks (Arabs) [g179], and saw that all the princes of the Armenians—some 800 souls—had been immolated in [the churches of] Naxchawan, and that only the dregs were left. Now the *kat'oghikos* of the Armenians, the venerable Yovhan O'dznets'i, who had cleansed the land of Ezr's heresy, had also died. Dawit' from Aramawn had been seated in his place on the throne of the *kat'oghikosate* [Davit'/David I Aramonets'i, 728-741].

[72] [Step'annos] brought these writings and letters of Germanus before [Dawit']. The *kat'oghikos* was indescribably satisfied and delighted by this. He honored and glorified the blessed Step'annos even more than previously. And he ordered him to write a reply to the [emperor's] letter which he himself had brought. [Step'annos] did this in a manner to excite admiration, explaining each [troublesome] word in that letter and pointing out every fault and failing. Such is the [beginning] content: "By offering you the peace of Christ..." In that period Yovhan, the bishop of Siwnik, had died. The prince of Siwnik' at the time was Babge'n. He and K'urd went to *kat'oghikos* Dawit' and requested of him the great scholar, the venerable Step'annos, who was a flaming sword in the hand of the most Holy Spirit. And the *kat'oghikos* ordained him to the throne of the metropolitanate of Siwnik', and he honored him further by designating him as the head of the bishops, and [designating] the [g180] throne of Siwnik' as the head of all the [ecclesiastical] thrones. Some say that the bishops of Siwnik' constituted the seventh grade of the bishops of the Armenians, but now [as a result of this change], they were established as the third class. But do not believe it. Only the Aghuanians are above the Siwnets'ik' because of the archbishopric; whereas, because of the metropolitanate, the [ecclesiastical heads of] Siwnik' are above all the other bishops of the Armenians, since none of the others have the distinction of metropolitan. Just as the patriarch is above the archbishop, and the archbishop above the metropolitan, so the metropolitan is above the bishop, since he ordains the bishops.

Having therefore received the metropolitanate, Step'annos went to his diocese, where he diffused education and knowledge of the divine precepts. He was like a knife which cuts away the diseased parts, or a skilled physician who heals the wounded. Like a fine salt he gave flavor to the tasteless. Like a bright sun he lit the darkness. Like a parent he gave milk to the children of Christ. To the grownups he gave a complete meal, like a reliable steward. [Step'annos] also interpreted several writings—Genesis, Job, Ezekiel and others—and his comments were bright as torch light among such interpretations. He made many sermons, distinguished the eight [musical] tones [g181], settled and put in order the hymns and blessings for Easter. He composed harmonious anthems (*kts'urds*), arranged artfully and with great intelligence the seven modes of the *Yinants'*,

as well as the hymns for fasting, which are sung during Lent. And finally, he explained the mysteries of the evening service.

[73] [Step'annos] had a sister who, from childhood, had followed the ways of virginity and had separated herself in a cave in the valley of Gar'ni. Her name was Sahakduxt and she practised a most severe asceticism. She was extremely knowledgeable in the art of music and, seated behind a curtain, she instructed many people. She composed many *kts'urds* and sweet melodies, including one in honor of the blessed Mary. When she died they laid her to rest in a place which is known for its many healing properties. Now the venerable Step'annos held the episcopate for one year, though others say eight years. He circulated around in the twelve districts of his large diocese during the summer, preaching words of truth. It happened that he had gone to see about the spiritual tax in the hamlet of Mozan in the bountiful district of Eghegeats'. In that place dwelled a woman addicted to the foolish disease of fornication whom he had on three previous occasions warned about the Lord's commandment, though she did not repent. Consequently, on this occasion [g182] the blessed man became furious and imposed severe punishment on her. Now after this, because of the sweltering heat, [Step'annos] left the village and went to a place called *Awag akn* ("Senior spring") to cool off in the fountain's sweet waters. He commanded that his tent should be erected there, and he placed his hammock some ways up on a willow tree. Then he went and secluded himself for many hours, praying. And then he returned and lay down on [the hammock] and fell asleep.

Now it happened that the disreputable woman had flown into a rage because of her burning desires. She took her lover as an accomplice and came with the intention of murdering the blessed man so that she could go about her work boldly. Approaching the tree where the saint's hammock was hanging, the lover, with sword raised, climbed up with the intention of killing him. He saw that [Step'annos] was asleep and that his breath, like a flame, rose upward and then came back down, and that there was an angel perched over the hammock shading it with its wings. The man was horrified and was so astonished that his limbs froze. But somehow he managed to descend the tree and inform the woman. But the woman again encouraged him promising him with honeyed words the delights of her prostitute's favors. And so he went up the tree again, but this time the vision he saw stunned him even more than before and he just fell off the tree in fright, like a senseless corpse. Now when the woman saw this unbelievable occurrence, rather than being [g183] chastised by it, she was prompted by the devil to escalate her wickedness. Grabbing the sword, she herself ascended the tree. She struck the saint's throat with the sword and spilled his innocent blood over the wooden bed, just as his Lord had shed His blood on a wooden instrument of torture. It was the same hatred for divine laws [which brings to mind] Heghias and Yovhanne's, one of whom fled for 40 days from Jezebel, Ahab's wife; the other was beheaded by Herod's daughter.

[74] Come morning, the servitors found out what had happened, and with much lamenting they took the saint's remains to the blessed retreat on the mountain called Sio'n, which was more radiant with men practising asceticism than [similar retreats in] Sinai, Skiwt'ia, and Egypt. Now when the residents of the village of Arkazan heard about this, they arose with their lord and went before those clerics and persuaded them to place the saint's remains in a room which had been built in the name of the blessed general Christopher. And they took and placed [Step'annos's body] in that chamber. It happened that Noy, the venerable ascetic of God, who had dwelled for many years on the blessed Mount Sio'n and was angelic in all his deportment, had a vision that morning. In it the heavens opened, and bands upon bands of angels in their multitudes came before the blessed Step'annos. Surrounding his soul, pure and stained with blood, they cried loudly [g184]: "Good and faithful servant, come, enter into the joy of your Lord." And thus, with very great praise they led him before the awesome throne of the Divinity, upon which in physical manifestation sat Christ, the Son of God.

The blessed [Step'annos] worshipped Him and offered himself before the Lord in his white cloak stained with blood, saying: "Vengeance is Yours and so is righteousness." And so, embraced by the apostles and the

patriarchs, they took him to their own place until Judgement Day. Now when the blessed Noy saw this and then heard about the damage [done by Step'annos' murder] he gathered many cenobites together, went to the saint[*'s* grave] and with great sighing, sobbing, and mourning he told them about the vision and the coming wrath of God which would be visited upon the district. And he entreated them to take care and to try to appease God with prayer. Then suddenly, indeed, punishment from On High was visited upon them by the Lord. The entire district was blanketed with a tangible darkness for 40 days which was accompanied by severe earthquakes and tremors. The earth was roiled like the sea from waves which began in the deep and rose up, and it was demolished as though by waves in the sea. Mountains fell, boulders were ripped from their foundations, houses and beautiful palaces became, as it were, the mausolea of their inhabitants. Fountains were covered, rivers disappeared, and [g185] everyplace was shaking. Something like human sounds were heard from below in the abyss rising up in the air, saying "Alas [or sighing] this valley, alas the valley (*vay dzor*).\" Some 10,000 souls are known to have been buried alive, while there is no reckoning the others. It is because of this [disaster] that the district was called Vayots' Dzor ("Valley of Sighs").

[75] Now after 40 days, the anger of God On High ended. The survivors of the district gathered and called the *kat'oghikos* and they held a conclave of monastics. After performing services for many days, they transferred the remains of the blessed [Step'annos] to the monastic retreat of T'anahat whose members practise constant prayer vigils and shun all types of delicacies. For this reason they are called *t'anahadk'* [eaters of a thin soup made from yoghurt]. A small chapel was built over [Step'annos' grave]. Subsequently, in the year 728 A.E. [A.D. 1279], the residents of the place constructed a beautiful domed church there and placed the blessed man's casket in its foundation.

Step'annos died in the year 184 A.E. [A.D. 735], on the 15th of [the month of] *Hrotis'*, on the 21st of July, on a day dedicated to the memory of Saint Margarit and Sime'on the simpleton. However, as for the woman who murdered the master, repentance came to her too late. She stripped off her clothes and, with rocks, tore her breasts, which flowed with a stream of blood. Deeply [g186] groaning, uttering lamentable cries, she loudly proclaimed her shameful and evil deed. Then she went to the monastery and across from it on the western side of the valley, she dug a ditch and remained buried in it up to her breasts, enduring the blistering heat of summer and the rigors of winter and lamenting and sighing from morning till night. She confessed her sins. As a result, the patriarch's pity was aroused and he begged the Lord to forgive her. One day during mass, a mighty shout was heard issuing from the saint's tomb, saying: "Oh, woman, may your sins be forgiven!" When everyone heard this, they glorified and praised God, and were thankful for the great mercy shown by the benefactor without resentment. But as for the woman, though forgiven, she did not leave the place. No, she remained there until her own death and was buried in that penitential pit of hers, opposite the monastery. For such a mercy may all nature offer praise and glory, continuous, unending, now and for all eternity. Amen.

[76]

---

## 32.

***The vision of the blessed Methodius, bishop of Patara and martyr about the past, present, and future, with quotations from Scripture, which was translated by Lord Step'annos, bishop of Siwnik'.***

In the last days the Persian monarchy will collapse. The troops of Ishmael will arise from the desert of Yathreb, and Gabawon will assemble, and there will be fulfilled the words of the prophet Ezekiel who said: "He called the beasts of the desert and the birds of heaven as his guests, saying, 'Gather yourselves and come, for I have slain a great slaughter for you. Eat the flesh of the mighty, and drink the blood of giants.'" This Gabawon is located in the country of Gibeon, and there the mighty Byzantines will fall under the blows of the

son of Ishmael, as they themselves had killed the powerful Jews and Persians. For resentment and anger will be sent into the world of men and animals, to the beasts of the forest, to plants and all fruit-bearing vegetation. Their arrival will be ruthless and four blows will go before them: ruin, trampling, devastation and pillage. "It is not out of love for you," Moses said to the sons of Israel, "that the Lord God leads you to the promised land [g188], to inherit, but because of the wickedness of its inhabitants."

Thus it is not out of affection for the sons of Ishmael, that the Lord God gives them the power to devastate the lands of the Christians, but because of the [Christians'] iniquities. There was not—nor could there ever be—such a danger from them. For men donned the clothing of prostitutes and, like them, covered their bodies with ornaments. Women [prostitutes] also stood boldly in the streets and crossroads of towns. The [men] transformed natural desires into acts against nature, in the words of the Apostle of God, and the women did the same: "Father and son went together to the same woman, as did brothers and all relatives." It was for this that long before these events the wise Paul issued his cry of alarm. God gave the people over to the evil of indecency, so they are committing indignities; for women at home have reversed the natural duty, the males also set aside the needs of women, and, burning with mutual lust, [the men] defiled each other. Therefore it became necessary that the price of their folly should be visited upon their own persons.

[77] Therefore God delivered them into the hands of the barbarians, who have fallen into sins and filth. Their wives will be contaminated by unclean abominations [g189] and by the sons of Ishmael who will draw lots for them. The Persians will be subject to pollution and Cappadocia will be put to the sword, devastation, and complete slavery. Sicily will become a desert, its people will be taken captive and killed. Judah will be polluted and taken captive. The Romans (Byzantines) will turn to flight, the islands of the sea will be ravaged, and their inhabitants will perish by the sword, and be taken into slavery. The Armenians will turn to flight and their population will be taken captive. Egypt, and the East, and Asorestan will fall under their yoke, and be subjected to trouble and made to serve mercilessly. Personal taxes will be demanded from them on top of what they lost through destruction, and [the conquered] will be more tormented than the captives themselves. The promised land will be filled with men blown from the four winds [the four corners of the world], like a multitude of locusts. Desolation and hunger will be their lot. The hearts of their killers will be gladdened, and they will excel all in their impiety until such time as they have served their allotted term. They will seize everything from the North to the West, and place everything under their yoke: men, animals, and birds. They will bathe in the waters of the sea. The retreats (*anapatk'*), emptied of their residents, will experience sorrows and suffering more cruel than [g190] those in captivity. They will take for their own the mountains, the fish of the sea, the wood of the forest, and the soil of the ground, the rocks which bear no fruit, as well as the fruits and labor of farmers. And all the storehouses will belong to them. And they will be bold enough to demand from the dead the same [taxes] as from the living. They will pity neither the orphans nor the widows, they will despise the poor and needy, disturb all the elderly and will show no compassion for their poverty. They will ridicule the weak minded along with those who shine with intelligence. All will fall silent and yield to force, unable to resist them or even to move. All will be paralyzed by fear and will accept their evil advice. There will be no one able to modify or censure their words. Their road will stretch from sea to sea, East to West, North to the desert [in the South]. And that road will be called tribulation.

[78] Old men and women will go along these roads with them, the impoverished and the grandees, the hungry and the thirsty, and those bound in fetters; and the dead will be envied. For such, in the words of the apostle, is the punishment for rebellion. Such a rebellion will be declared by the appearance of a man of impiety, the son of destruction, and just such a rebellion is his plan. And it was because of this [g191] that God called Ishmael, a wild ass (*e'sh*). And for this reason the wild asses and goats of the desert and all types of wild beasts will become tame and familiar. People will be starved, corrupted and persecuted, and the beasts will be killed. All the trees in the forest will be destroyed. The beauty of the mountains will be corrupted. The cities will be ruined and footsteps will not be heard in their limits for the diminution of people. The country will be polluted with blood and will withhold its fruit. This is because those forcibly holding them are not men but

barbarians and sons of the desert. And they will come to make a desert; those who are corrupted will come in order to corrupt. With their swords they will attack pregnant women, they will snatch small children from their mothers' arms and kill them on the ground where they will become food for wild beasts.

Priests will be slain within the holy of holies, and in the house of holiness [the conquerors] will sleep with their women where the divine mass had been celebrated. The vestments of holiness, they will throw on to their women, sons, and daughters and then seat them on their horses. **[79]** They will load their pack animals in the resting places of saints. They will kill and devour the Christian peoples like a scourging fire. For the blessed apostle said [g192]: "All those in Israel are not Israelites." The same may be applied to the Christians. As Scripture informs, 7,000 folk of the sons of Israel survived, those who did not bow the knee before Baal; and all of Israel was spared because of them. And so it shall be in the time of rebellion and punishment by the sons of Ishmael: there will be few people found who are true Christians. As our Savior said in the holy Gospel: "When the Son of Man arrives, will there be faith in the land?" In that time, the Spirit will become reduced, and many will apostasize the truth and the life-giving Cross and the divine mystery, and—without being forced by tortures—they will apostasize Christ and follow the rebels. For this is what the divine apostle prophesied, saying that in the latter days people will rebel against the faith and will follow after those who have fanaticism in their souls, and will deceive their own consciences with diabolical doctrine, and the false words of liars.

In the same passage it says that "Evil times will arrive in the latter days. For men will be self-loving, silver-loving, proud, insolent, cursers, disobedient to their parents, graceless, unholy, thoughtless, merciless, betrayers, cruel, unbridled, vicious haters who have the outer forms of divinity [g193], while having lost its power." In this punishment, all those who are weak in faith will voluntarily separate themselves from the Holy Church. The times themselves will summon them to fanaticism. For the humble folk, the quiet, true Christians, the nobles of the house of T'orgom, the select and intelligent men will not be looking for the truth in those times. Instead of them we will find people who are selfish, greedy, abusive, presumptuous thieves, drunkards, fornicators and adulterers, merciless robbers, unruly, rude, slanderous, impatient, heartless, treacherous, arrogant, with sensual and servile manners. And, under the mask of piety, they will have truly foresworn piety. Such people will be the servitors in those days and will joyfully do whatever they are ordered to do. Among them the pious worshipper will be regarded as nothing.

**[80]** The world, under the punishment of the sons of Ishmael, will lose spiritual hope. The honor of the priests will be eliminated, and worship in the house of God will diminish and the sound of the divine liturgy will grow silent in all the churches. The priests will be just like the people [g194]. When the time of tribulation will come to its height, men and animals will be even more burdened. People will become corrupted and fall to the ground. But there will be other blows awaiting them. A man will go to bed at night and arise to find [tax collectors] demanding gold and silver at the door. When all the gold and silver is exhausted, they will sell their belongings. Then they will sell their children. People will ask why the Lord ignores the suffering of the faithful. It is to distinguish between faith and unbelief, and to separate the wheat from the chaff, because that time will be as a purifying fire. God will make them suffer patiently to reveal His elect, as is said: "Blessed are you when they insult you, mistreat you, and say all sorts of evil words and lies for my sake. Rejoice and be glad, for great is your reward in heaven."

However, after the troubles caused by the sons of Ishmael, when the world is in such danger that there seems no hope of escape from their hands, at that time suddenly the king of the Greeks, that is, the Romans [the Byzantine emperor] will rise against them with great vehemence. He will be like a man coming out of sleep whom people had regarded as dead and [g195] useless. He will come against them from the sea of Ethiopia, and will subject their country of Yathreb to the sword and destruction, and seize their wives and their children. The king's sons will reduce the inhabitants of their country, striking them and inspiring terror in them. For all their camps will be delivered into the hand of the king of the Romans, and they will be under his

yoke. They will endure anguish, hunger, thirst and pain, becoming slaves themselves. Their wives and children will become slaves of those they had enslaved, a slavery a hundred times harsher and more cruel. The lands devastated by them will savor peace, and each will return to his country and inheritance: to Armenia, Cilicia, Syria, Africa, Galatia, Sicily. Moreover others [freed] from their enslavement will not return to their countries but will multiply there like locusts and will destroy Arabia, and the coasts will become calm. The anger and resentment of the king of the Greeks will be inflamed against those who have denied our Lord Jesus Christ.

**[81]** Then there will be a great time of peace, such as there has never been and never will be. For in the last days, joy will reign in the world: they will build cities, free the priests from their dangers, and remove [g196] people from their distress. It was just this peace that God's apostle meant when he said: "They talk about peace, prosperity and joy, and suddenly destruction falls on them." And yet according to the Lord's word in the Gospel: "In the era of Noah, people ate, drank, took wife and husband, as it will be in the last days." So men will enjoy this peace, take pleasure in food and drink, will engage in joy and pleasure, and build buildings, as though they never had experienced fear or anxiety.

Then will come what is in the prophecy of Ezekiel, in the days of the final end of the world. Gog and Magog will come forth against the land of Israel, the gates to the North will be opened and powerful peoples, who had been confined in the North by Alexander, will start to move: Gog and Magog, and Anig, Agig, Ak'iaz, Dip'or, the P'orinats'ik', the Aghrenats'ik', Huns, P'arziats'ik', the Dekghimats'ik', the Sarmatians, the T'et'ghe'ats'ik', the Zarmetats'ik', the Kak'onats'ik' the Amazardk', the Garmadats'ik', Mardakerk' (Cannibals), the T'arp'ats'ik', Alans, P'askghinkats'ik', the Argne'ats'ik', and the Satar'e'ats'ik'. These are the 22 kingdoms blocked by the door/gate which Alexander built [in the Caucasus]. Seeing them, people will flee in terror [g197] and hide in the mountains, in caves and in cemeteries. Many will be slain, and there will be no one to bury them, for the peoples of the North will eat the flesh of animals and drink their blood. They feed on all things foul, reptiles, scorpions, carrion, and human abortions. They will sacrifice children and give them as food to their mothers.

They will pollute the world, and there will be no one who can resist them. After seven and a half years they will reach the city of Joppe. The Lord will send his military commander who will destroy them in a single moment. After that the king of the Greeks will descend and dwell in Jerusalem for seven and a half years. This will make ten and a half years. At the completion of this ten and a half years, the son of perdition will appear. He will be born in K'orazin, be nourished in Bethsaida, and will reign in Capernaum. K'orazin will rejoice because he was born there, Bethsaida will rejoice because he was nourished there, and Capernaum will rejoice because he will reign as king there. Therefore the Lord in the Gospels, three times repeats "woe," saying "Woe to you K'orazin, Bethsaida, and Capernaum who will be raised up to heaven, for you will then go down to hell."

**[82]** When the son of perdition appears, the king of the Greeks will go to Golgotha, the place [g198] where the life-giving Cross was erected. It was to this [Cross] that our Lord God was nailed, and willingly endured death for our sakes. There the king of the Greeks will take his own crown, put it on the Cross, and stretch out his hands to heaven. And he will place his kingdom in the hands of God the Father. Then the Cross will rise up to heaven with the crown, for the Cross on which He was nailed for the common salvation of all will appear first on the day of His coming to resist the unbelievers. The king of Greece will give up his spirit and the kingdoms and principalities will be overturned as David's prophecy is realized, which says: "The mountains will tremble before the Lord, for He has come to judge the earth."

Now the son of perdition will come from the tribe of Dan, according to the prophecy of the patriarch Jacob, and will be like a snake lying in ambush on the road, waiting to bite a horse's hoof to throw its rider, who is left with only the Lord as his salvation. The rider is the truth and the horse's heel is the kingdom of the just.

The saints will then be mounted on the real horse of the faith, which will be bitten on the heel in the last days by the snake of the son of perdition. In his fantasies he will perform false and powerless miracles [g199] for the weak and presumptuous, as if to make the blind see, the lame walk, the deaf hear, to cure the demoniacs, to make the sun eclipse, and the moon [appear to turn] to blood. By such false illusions he will alter the faith and the elect. The patriarch Jacob, having seen through the eyes of the mind the evils that were to happen in the world, and the misery reserved for the human race that would come from this destroying snake, the son of perdition, this serpent concealed in human form, said: "Lord, we will wait for Your salvation." But the Lord had said earlier that if it is in any way possible, he will mislead even the elect, as he enters Jerusalem and sits down in the Temple of God, as though God's equal—this creature incarnated in human form, produced by the seed of man in the womb of the woman from the tribe of Dan just as Judas Iscariot was, who betrayed the Lord.

**[83]** However, God will not ignore the proliferation of crimes caused by the son of perdition, or countenance the loss of the human race which was bought with His blood. He will soon send his trusted servants Enoch and Elijah to oppose him. [They will oppose] this false and deceitful one who confessed that he had come to lead astray and ruin the multitude. Seeing him, the nations [g200] will be ashamed and resist his fanaticism, they will abandon him, flee from him, and take refuge with the saints. In response, [the evil one], seeing himself disgraced and despised by everyone and smouldering with a violent rage, will slay the saints of God. Then shall appear a sign of the glorious coming of the Son of God, who moves among the clouds of heaven in heavenly glory with all the angels and the archangels. And the evil one will be slain through the Spirit, and with His mouth. Such is the vision of the apostle; the righteous will rise as bright stars, while the wicked will head to hell, to suffer eternal damnation.

---

### 33.

***Marwan the Tachik (Arab) general comes to Siwnik'; how the Persian Baban [Babak] became son-in-law to Vasak, lord of Siwnik'; about the burning of Mak'enots', and the devastations of Geghark'unik' and Baghasakan.***

On the completion of the 176th year of the Armenian Era [A.D. 727], the accursed, world-destroying Marwan (Mrvan) came to Armenia with many *Tachik* troops and, like a fierce fire, burned and ruined [g201] the beauty of our land. Indeed, he became known by the name *Awaranshan* ["symbol of destruction"]. He brought a great deal of booty and secured himself in the fortified village of Shaghat in Siwnik'. He also wanted to wreck the beauty of the land of Sisak. He assembled his troops there in the district of Tsghuk'. However Vasak, lord and chief prince of Siwnik', quickly went and brought the Persian Babak back from Atrpatakan with many troops. After beating Marwan severely, he forced him to flee. But Vasak died in the same year.

**[84]** At this same time, Babak took [Vasak's] daughter for a wife and also took control of the district. The same year Lord Nerse'h Siwni, son of P'ilip, killed because of some grudge Varaz-Trdat, son of Step'annos, prince of the Aghuans, and his son was killed in his mother's arms. All his belongings were taken as booty. This Varaz-Trdat was a member of the Mihrakan clan, which held the lordship of Aghuania as its private property. After this the district of Baghasakan was not obedient to the orders and laws of Babak. As a result, [Babak], with the aid of Abl-Asad of Aghuania, fiercely and mercilessly destroyed the district of Baghasakan killing even the women and little children. These folk, who were innocently killed, have been crowned [as martyrs] by Christ [g202].

Now the next year Babak went to the district of Geghark'unik' and put to the sword some 15,000 souls among its inhabitants. He also put to the fire and ruined the glorious retreat and renowned monastery of Mak'enots',

stealing all its belongings, and burning and demolishing all its structures. However, as the clerics had been forewarned, they divided into two groups. Half went with Father Sagho'mo'n—not the one earlier [mentioned] who was called the priests' father, but another one, his student—to the district of Shirak to the blessed monastery of Jresk, which became even more radiant through the ascetic practises of this Sagho'mo'n who later became a stylite. The other group went to Aghuania, having for a leader a certain one of the brothers. They settled in Mihr-Nerse's' monastery, called Jrvshtik. And the place remained uninhabited until the days of Grigor, lord of Siwnik', known as Sup'an, when it was restored and the grand church was [re]built. And it gleamed brighter than before.

---

[85]

### 34.

#### ***About T'anahat monastery, and father Mxit'ar.***

In this period the blessed, wondrous, and renowned monastery [g203] of T'anahat flourished. It was built in an elevated spot in upper Siwnik' at the foot of a mountain, in the midst of a forest. The monks followed a regime which required uninterrupted prayer; they abstained from food and satisfied themselves with only dry bread and water, taken once at night. Silent, unwavering, and praying all day, like hanging lanterns that are not extinguished, they did not break their discipline day or night. Aside from the servitors, no one crossed the threshold of the monastery either going in or out. Notwithstanding the repeated injunctions of the princes and bishops of Siwnik', they would not even consent to fortify themselves on Sunday with soup (*t'an*), cheese and oil. Vegetables and fruit were enough for them. For this reason they were called T'anahat, meaning "foregoing soup." On the principal feast days they would dine on a small quantity of olive oil, served in cups. These details are provided to us by the history of the venerable Mashtots' of Sevan. We have found mention of them in the inscriptions in their church which was built 400 years before the Armenian Era [c. A.D. 151], by the princes of Siwnik', in the name of the blessed protomartyr Stephen.

The abbot of the monastery was named Mxit'ar, a man who—by his austerities—had taken his place among the most virtuous. He made obedient to that blessed church wild animals such as bears and wolves [g204] and put them into the service of the monastery. As a monument found there states, he made them vassals of the *mek'oray*, that is, of the church. Wolves carefully guarded flocks of sheep and herds of cattle, while bears carried burdens on their backs. The blessed father Mxit'ar always went into the forest and sat across from the monastery. Here, wild beasts gathered in his presence and solicited his prayers and forgiveness, as intelligent beings, each according to its needs. Having presided for many years over the good order of the monastery, he passed into the ranks of angels. [Mxit'ar's] holy remains were placed in a wooden box on a small hill near the church, where a hollow had been dug in the ground and a monument erected. This was his grave, which remains till now and works great miracles on those afflicted with diseases and sicknesses. May Christ, by his intercession, take pity on our land and on us in future difficulties.

---

[86]

### 35.

#### ***Concerning the bishops of Siwnik' who succeeded the blessed Step'annos in his position.***

The blessed Step'annos held the episcopal throne [g205] for 22 years and then died the death of a martyr. He was succeeded by Lord Yovse'p', a good and righteous man by all accounts, for 17 years. Then Lord Yovakim reigned for 17 years; Lord Sadovk, 32 years; Lord Yovhanne's, 2 years; Lord Sagho'mo'n, 7 years; Lord

Eghia, 8 years; Lord T'e'odoros, 18 years; Lord Ge'org, 8 years; Lord Dawit', 17 years. The latter lived in the days of P'ilippe', prince of Siwnik', and Grigor Sup'an, the great *nahapet* (patriarch) of Siwnik', son of Sahak. He established the throne of the episcopate in Tat'ev monastery and enlarged its borders. I shall tell more about him in the proper place.

After him, Lord Yovhanne's occupied the throne for 10 years; then Lord Sagho'mo'n, who was adorned with the greatest spiritual virtue and shone like the sun in the vault of heaven. He also increased the splendor of the episcopal see. He died after holding the episcopate for 17 years. Then came the venerable and indefatigable and regal Lord Yovhanne's, cherished by angels and men, who reigned for 38 years. It was he who built the propitiatory at Tat'ev which resembled the firmament. I propose to recount his praiseworthy actions in greater detail subsequently. However, for now, after introducing this list of bishops and their various works [g206], I want to go back and narrate, to the best of my ability, [information about] the princes: their wars, their building activities, their times of peace, their admirable work in building churches which stand in various places on their own domains, and constitute imperishable monuments and undying memorials.

---

[87]

### 36.

#### ***Shahanduxt, daughter of royalty, and about the great and awesome miracles which occurred in the land of Siwnik'.***

Oh brothers, I want to tell you about the wondrous miracles which took place in that period through divine providence. The crown prince of the Aghuans, Varaz-Trdat, had a daughter named Shahanduxt whose appearance was new and rare. Her beauty was such that it astounded the beholders who believed that she was not made of ordinary flesh and blood but rather fashioned from luminous ether and delicate rays of light. The House of T'orgom requested her as a bride. And so she left her land and her patrimonial House, and went to marry one of the princes of the line of Hayk. When she entered [g207] the borders of Baghk', travelling along a secure route, she came upon a very rocky area where a large boulder had crumbled down a precipice creating an abyss which faces the great patriarchate of Tat'ev. Hidden close by were many legions of men armed with swords, who had come from Persia because of her beauty. They were holding the narrow passes of the route with the aim of abducting the girl.

[Her companions] were unaware of this. Suddenly, [the bandits] sprang out at them, and with their swords raised, began to mercilessly kill the Christians. Now when this young maiden of great faith saw what was happening, she realized what the cause was. Making the sign of the cross over herself she whipped her steed and dashed among the shattered rocks. Here is what we found in an old letter written in her own handwriting:

"I, the sinful handmaiden of Christ, Shahanduxt, daughter of Varaz-Trdat, was going as a bride to the House of T'orgom. When I arrived at the borders of Baghk' where the road passed by a precipice, suddenly Ishmaelites jumped out of ambush. These were men who wanted to abduct me for the renown of my beauty. Putting their swords to work, they killed the band of horsemen with me. It was then that I thought it better [g208] to die for my Christ by jumping over the cliff than to be ripped to shreds by foreign wolves and be lost. And so, thinking of the blessed Mother of God and Saint Hr'ip'sime', and surrendering myself to the Holy Trinity, I made the sign of the cross over my pitiful self and, turning the horse around, galloped headlong over the edge of the precipice. Then, propelled by a strong gust of wind and an invisible force, I went down to the bottom of the valley, without any injury to me or my horse, as though I were riding a cart. Greatly astonished, I thanked and glorified

the Most High, Who had saved me in that way. Thus, having alighted on flat ground, I devoted myself to Christ and made a vow not to leave this place until my last day.

Now as to the Ishmaelites who had witnessed this surprising thing, they left my people alone and departed. As for me, I built a chapel with a cell in that place and gave my life over to the practise of religion. Despite the pleas of my parents and of the princes who had requested me as a beautiful bride, I never left my retreat. Then I called the venerable bishop of Siwnik', to whom I entrusted myself and all my belongings. Half [of my wealth] was to be distributed to the needy, the other given to the holy church of Tat'ev. The place [of the retreat] itself I left to the Holy Church, as well as the whole valley, from the boundary of Shnhe'r and beyond, up to the Ginakan River."

This [document] was actually written [g209] in Shahanduxt's own hand. Remaining there, she gathered other young women around her, and, after a life of great asceticism, she died after 30 years. Then the bishop went and buried this blessed one's venerable remains in that same spot. Through her intercession may Christ protect this House and accept it into His own flock.

[88]

---

### 37.

***The princes of Siwnik', Sahak and others; their deeds and deaths which occurred in the year 270 [of the Armenian era, A.D. 821] and later; stories and brief notices about their actions and words.***

During the patriarchate of the Armenians of Lord Dawit' Kakaghets'i [806-833], and during the *sparapetut'iwn* of Smbat Bagratuni, the prince of Siwnik' was the great patriarch Sahak. He ruled his lordship with regal splendor and fully comported himself with the plans and activities of Smbat, *sparapet* ("commander-in-chief") of the Armenians, in all of the latter's military operations and benefits to the land of the Armenians. In this period the great caliph (*amirapet*) Maimun held the land of the Armenians in service. He sent as *ostikan* ("governor") to Armenia [g210], a man named Xul along with a small brigade. [Xul] arrived in the land and went to the gates of the city of Dvin. He wanted to enter and dwell there. Now there was a certain man of the imperial line named Sewada there, who had taken for a wife a woman named Aruseak, from the Bagratid clan, and for that reason forcibly held many parts of the land of the Armenians.

This [Sewada], who had united with Smbat Bagratuni and Sahak, lord of Siwnik', rebelled against Xul. He had assembled a military force and wanted to fight. Although the patriarch Dawit' interceded many times, he was not able to dissuade him. Then Xul arose with a brigade of 2,000 men and made a ferocious military assault [on them] by the banks of the Hrazdan River, opposite Kawkert. He put them to flight. It was there that he killed the handsome prince Sahak of Siwnik' whose corpse fell to the ground. Meanwhile, Sewada and Smbat barely escaped by a hairsbreadth. When the venerable patriarch Dawit' heard about this, he lamented and sobbed grievously. Taking a group of many servitors, he made a royal coffin. Then, fetching the body with solemn worship, with psalms and blessings, they brought it to the *kat'oghikosate* in Dvin. There it was placed in a tomb close to the holy propitiatory. He was succeeded in his principality by his son Grigor who was called by the nickname [g211] of Sup'an. [Grigor] was a great person, highly intelligent and able to cope with all of life's vicissitudes. He administered the throne of his principality better than any of his predecessors, and directed the cultivation of our land.

[89] After Dawit', Lord Yovhanne's [IV, 833-855] from the village of Ovayits' in Kotayk' succeeded him in the patriarchate of the Armenians. However, due to his strict and fearsome ways, some senseless slanderers

from his own House concocted lies about him and deceived Bagrat, prince of the Armenians, and others. They convinced them to exile the *kat'oghikos*. When [Yovhanne's] learned about this, he voluntarily left the [patriarchal] throne and went and dwelled in solitude at the monastery of Ayri (Ayrivank'). Now when the great [Grigor] Sup'an of Siwnik' heard about this matter, he could not endure such a great disaster and the slander, and so he went to *Sparapet* Smbat and conferred with him. They resolved to avenge the blessed man of God. They removed Lord Yovhanne's [from the monastery] and reestablished him on the throne. Then it happened that all the slanderers died through severe punishment from On High. After this affair, Grigor [Sup'an] continued to administer his principality nobly. But the evil one [Satan] would not tolerate this and implanted envy in the heart of Babge'n, brother of P'ilippe', son of Vasak, who was the other *nahapet* of Siwnik', and was from the same clan. [Satan] aroused and stoked hatred between them, after the fashion of Cain and Abel. As a result [g212] they assembled their troops and went against each other in battle. Babge'n killed Grigor, but then he himself died through the horrible scandal which resulted, excluded from the love and ways of the Lord. And then [Grigor's] family came with great mourning and took and buried them with their fathers. Vasak, his son, inherited his lordship. He was known by the nickname of Gabur'.

**[90]** [Vasak Gabur'] became the son-in-law of Ashot Bagratuni, son of Smbat, who ruled over the Armenians like a king, by marrying his daughter, Mariam. During Ashot's reign, [Vasak] was extremely obedient to his father-in-law's deeds and wishes, and, as a result, he exceeded his predecessors in glory and authority by marrying into the royal clan of the Bagratids. In this same period there ruled the *amirapet* of the Persians, now styled sultan [caliph], the accursed Jap'ar. He sent to Armenia a governor (*ostikan*) named Apuse'ch. He came to Taron, seized Prince Bagarat, and put him in fetters. As a result of this, the inhabitants of Taurus Mountain killed Apuse'ch and put his troops to flight. When the *amirapet* heard about this he was enraged and sent [to Armenia] a very vicious individual named Bugha with a large force. He ordered that all the princes [g213] and chiefs of the Armenians be brought before him in chains, and that others be put to the sword. [Bugha] came, seized the Armenian princes Ashot and Dawit', sons of Bagarat, in Taron, and Ashot, the great prince of the Artsrunis, and put them in fetters. *Sparapet* Smbat went to Bugha on his own. Others were mercilessly put to the sword. [Bugha] selected the attractive offspring of the nobility in order to turn them to their impious faith [*i.e.*, Islam]. This occasioned the great martyrdoms for Christ of Atom with seven comrades and Step'annos *kon* with another 150 folk. The blessed patriarch Yovhanne's designated a memorial day for them, on the 25th of the month of *mehekan* [February]. This took place in the 302nd year of the Armenian Era [A.D. 853].

Now once Bugha saw that all his evil acts had been successful, he began to send many bandits in pursuit of the great prince of Siwnik', Vasak, who was called Ishxanik ("Little Prince"), and his brothers, who were sons of P'ilippe', son of Vasak, lords of Siwnik'. Frightened, some of them secured themselves in the inaccessible strongholds of Baghk'. However, Vasak did not trust the security of the fortresses. He eluded [Bugha's men] and went to parts of the district of Kotayk'. When Bugha learned about this, he sent troops after him. When they arrived they wanted to seize him, but [Vasak] turned on them and killed them all. Then [g214] he went east to the district of Gardman, to their prince Ktrich, thinking that he might secure some help from him. But he did not. Rather, that prince, deceived by a *dev*, betrayed him. **[91]** He seized [Vasak], put him in chains, and sent him to Bugha so that, perhaps, he himself might elude his wrath. But, through the will of righteous God, he was later seized by him and killed with great wickedness. Now that evil and accursed Bugha received Vasak with the greatest delight. Then he had his brother, Ashot, and the great lady, their mother, brought to Dvin by a group of fast brigands and put them in prison in chains. Thus did [Bugha] seize all the Armenian and Aghuan princes, and then went to the royal court, presenting himself before the great *amirapet*. When the evil-minded Jafar saw them, he furiously interrogated them about the faith. Using great and various tortures and deprivations he tormented them for many days. Some, whose faith he had destroyed [converted to Islam], and were circumcised.

Now as for the very pious Vasak and his brother Ashot, although they did not believe a word and did not weaken in the faith of Christ, nonetheless they temporarily dissimulated and obeyed the wishes of the *amirapet*. But [g215] brave and manly Smbat held to his confession of the faith even though in chains, and died a pious death in prison. They took his body and laid it to rest in the martyrdom of the great prophet Daniel. [Ashot] succeeded to his lordship, the same [Ashot] who [later] became king. Now it happened that the great Vasak Siwnik' with his mother, brothers, and other princes escaped from the bitter bondage of Bugha's imprisonment. They came and entered their own land of Sisakan, to the absolute joy of the entire land. And they divested themselves of the death-bringing shadow of the faith of the impious Muhammad, donning instead the national dress of purity and light. This was done after great regret and repentance, confession, and extensive gift-giving to the poor. Their intercessor before God was the venerable bishop of Siwnik', Lord Soghomon, who in this period grew in glory and consideration, due to the many acts of bravery performed by Prince Ashot, the man who was to become king. The great *sepuh* prince of Siwnik', Vasak Gabur' died while still a young man. He left three sons, the eldest of whom was Grigor called Sup'an, [the others were] Sahak, and Vasak.

[92] The venerable lady Mariam took his body, adorned it with royal ornaments, and [g216] then—with a large crowd, mourning and lamenting with trumpets and stringed instruments, and with *Kat'oghikos* Zak'aria—took and laid it in the resting place of his fathers. His son Grigor Sup'an inherited his lordship. He embellished the excellent arrangements of his principality, and devoted all of his vast wealth and life to pious works and in building the superb shrines which still exist as testimony to this. Now in this same period the venerable Mashtots' on the island of Sevan was conspicuous by his shining virtues. He was the son of a lay priest named Grigor Eghivardets'i. The latter came to the district of Sot'k' and settled there. He gave Mashtots' into tutelage of the blessed abbot Step'annos of Mak'enots' [monastery] where he matured, growing in inner perfection. He was ordained to the priesthood by Lord Dawit', bishop of Siwnik'. Thereafter he went to the retreat of Artawaz-Aparank' and thence to the island in [Lake] Sevan. After long ascetic practise, he received an order through a vision to build a church in the name of the Twelve Apostles and to create a community of cenobites. Indeed, twelve [beings] had come to him, walking on the water of the lake, and indicated the place where the church should be built [g217].

Then, motivated by this vision and influenced from On High, the great lady (*tikin*, "queen") Mariam, wife of Vasak Siwnik', came to the blessed Mashtots' and, through her great entreaties, persuaded him to begin work. They built a magnificently adorned church in the name of the Twelve Apostles, and another one in the name of the Queen, the Mother of God. Decorating it with the grandest of Church ornaments and vessels, they erected that church as a house of God and a dwelling place for spiritually motivated men in 323 of the Armenian Era [A.D. 874]. Mashtots' laid the foundation of the monastery and embellished it with heavenly orders. The Prince of Princes Ashot, hearing about the renown of the blessed convent, came to visit the holy father. And he gave as gifts a blessed cross, and as a hereditary [bequest] to the Holy Church the villages of Varser, Ts'amak'aberd, Gomadzor, Berdk', the plains of Ur'eats' and its game from birds of prey, the vineyards of Garni and Erevan, and other places. This was confirmed with many anathemas [against dispossession]. Furthermore, the same Mariam built a splendid church in Shoghuag in the name of the blessed Apostle Peter and established there many brilliant orders of the clergy, for the soul of her lord Vasak, prince of Siwnik'. She also purchased from a Muslim the village of Shoghuag for 60,000 *drams*, to be free from all wordly taxes [g218], and then gave this as hereditary property to the blessed church. In addition, she bought a village named Gne'r in the district of Mazaz for 3,000 *dahekans* and gave it to the church. She confirmed this with an indelible memorial inscription in the presence of *Kat'oghikos* Ge'org, Yovhanne's, bishop of Siwnik', Gagik, lord of Siwnik', Hrahat, brother of Vasak, Artavazd Shaghatnets'i, and many other *azats* and princes.

[93] Now it came about in this period that, through divine providence, consultations took place among Grigor Sup'an and Vasak, called *Ishxanik*, the lords of Siwnik' and Grigor, called Derenik, who was prince of the House of Artsrunik' and among other princes of the Armenians, and they requested from the *amirapet* Amir-

Ahmat that Ashot Bagratuni be established as king of Armenia, [he, who had] newly restored and adorned the land of the Armenians in construction and deep peace. [Ashot] was anointed [king] by Lord Ge'org, *kat'oghikos* of the Armenians, Lord Yovhann'e's, bishop of Siwnik' and other bishops in 334 of the Armenian Era [A.D. 885]. But after this the great prince Vasak, called *Ishxanik*, died and was buried with his forebears. Then his brother Ashot inherited his lordship. He was a mild, peaceloving, pious [g219], and God-fearing man who was completely absorbed with the cultivation of his patrimonial lordship.

King Ashot, after a reign of 5 years, died. His son, Smbat, inherited his kingdom. At Afshin's order, he was anointed king of Armenia by *Kat'oghikos* Ge'org and Yovhann'e's, bishop of Siwnik', along with the *bdeshts* of the Georgians, Atrnerse'h, and the prince of Siwnik', Ashot, and the prince of the Artsrunik', Gagik, and other princes. Now after many events in the land of Armenia, Afshin went to the court [in Baghdad], assembled many troops, and wanted to come to Armenia and obliterate it. However, through the will of God he died at once and his evil proposal came to naught. [94] But then his place was taken by his brother, Yusup', at whose hand the Armenians experienced enormous damage and indescribable evils. Yusup' came as *ostikan* ("governor") to the Armenians, [appointed by] the *amirapet*. At first he greatly honored and elevated King Smbat and all the princes with very great gifts. He, similarly, was honored by them with double the gifts. And for some time he brought great peace to all of Armenia as a result of which everyone was occupied with church building. This was especially so for the sons of Vasak, the lord of Siwnik' [g220], Grigor Sup'an, Sahak, and Vasak and their mother Mariam in the district of Geghark'unik', since the areas around the shore of the lake in that district had come to them as their part of the inheritance. The main seat of the princes of Siwnik' was Baghk', Vayots' Dzor, and the areas around them belonging to Vasak and Ashot and the sons of Ashot, Smbat, Sahak, Babgen and Vasak, and Vasak's son, P'ilippe'.

As we mentioned above, Mariam built churches at Sevan and then at Shoghuag. Sup'an also built a marvellous church for the rational flock [of Christians] in the village of Kot' in the name of the blessed Mother of God. He adorned it with very great appointments and established in it a class of servitors, and then fortified it with huge stone walls. Then he held the consecration service with a great assembly and asked the *kat'oghikos*, the bishops and his own bishop Lord Yovhann'e's to designate for him as a memorial in all the churches the performing of three [40 day] fasts (*k'ar'asunk'*, 40), and readings of the canon about affliction as a supplementary vesper, and the recitation of morning psalms. They so designated because of his numerous munificent deeds. He also erected a memorial inscription on the [wall] of the blessed church, with this text:

"I, Sup'an, established this spiritual memorial to Christ in the village of Kot', home of my ancestors [g221]. They had previously fortified it by walls, at great labor and expense. After this, thinking about [what] my ancestors [had achieved], I, through the will of God, constructed a house of God, the roof of the God of Jacob, named after the Holy Queen, the Mother of God, out of dressed and polished stone. Inside [the structure] were eight chambers above and below. [95] For this blessed temple I designated priests and embellished the Mother of God [church] with priests, after the example of my ancestors. [These] and many other servitors I freed from the burden of [paying] royal taxation and [the tax called] *bekar*. I established [for the church] lands and waters and gave to each priest 50 *drams* a year, which increased five fold. Furthermore, I arranged that during my lifetime four fasts be performed, as well as [readings of] the canon of affliction, and morning psalms, and that after my death these also be performed for my sinful soul. Every year each of the priests are to perform four fasts for my sake. Now should anyone attempt to ravish what I have given for my soul—the lands or the other gifts to the priests—or should anyone after us harass the priests whom I have freed, be that [person] from my own family, from the clergy, or other nobles, may that person's name be expunged from the world's memory [g222], and may he be condemned and be shamed in the awful court of Christ and be accountable for my sins and inherit the unquenchable fires and eternal torments. As for the priests, should any of you shirk or neglect what was designated, or lazily

compromise the fasting, may the Lord God condemn you and your children and family and may your portion be that of the priests who kill their masters."

[Sup'an] also built a domed church surrounded by stone walls in the name of the blessed Mother of God at the glorious monastery of Mak'enots', a venue worthy of heaven. He also built numerous other structures, adorning [the church] with unstinting expenditures, and making it resplendent with many goods. [He attached to the church as income] villages, fields, and vineyards in Garni and Erevan and other places. Moreover, he erected a memorial detailing the revenues allotted to it, which had this text:

"By the grace of God I, Sup'an, prince of Siwnik', built this church at Mak'enots' and unsparingly adorned it with valuable utensils and divine testaments. To the church which is named after the Mother of God, I gave [properties] from our private property with all its own borders, mountains [g223], and plains, the fishing of Boghashe'n for its table, 700 *drams* of the rents of Geghdzanaget, 200 *drams* from Kot', 350 from Anmer'e, which totals 1250 *drams*, five shops in Ani, five vineyards in Erevan and 500 rows of the vineyard in the village of Garni, two vineyards in Eghegis. [96] All this should provide plenty for the needs of the brotherhood. I have enriched it inside and outside, and given herds of cattle, calves and sheep. Now, with God as my witness, I beseech all the blessed clerics of the holy convent to perform for my sinful soul two quarantines at the holy mass, to sing in the evenings the psalm called the Canon of Affliction, and to sing the morning psalms which I have designated in all the churches. Let no one, neither Lord Yovhanne's, *kat'oghikos* of the Armenians, nor anyone from my own House, neither my children nor my descendants, dare contest this, countervene my gifts, or try to remove or change what I have stipulated. Let anyone so inclined receive frightful curses from God and from all occupants of the throne of Saint Gregory and may [such a violator] share in the portion of Judas, the betrayer. Again I say to you, the abbots, and the clerics of this monastery: remain resolute until the coming of Christ. Preach and sing psalms for me [g224] without hindrance. As for whoever neglects to celebrate the atoning sacrifice in the annual quarantine after I have passed from this life, may he be excluded by Christ, receive the lot of Simon Magus, and be anathematized by the holy councils. I also built a church with eight chambers in the town of Kot'. I did this to honor the House of the Lord which I constructed. And I freed from all royal taxes the priests of the Mother of God [church] as well as other celebrants of the church of priestly rank."

Behold, this is the inscription at Mak'enots', but we could not decipher it entirely because of the oldness and deterioration of the stone, since many words and [descriptions of] gifts made by the princes were missing. Nonetheless, what we have provided should be enough so that their memory is not completely wiped out. All this was done during the years 300-350 of the Armenian Era [A.D. 851-901]. Now Grigor's brother, Sahak, built [a church] in the village of Noratus. It is a splendid building which cost large sums of money. There he established numerous clergy and there, near its door, he himself rests in a tomb. Then, motivated by blessed emulation, Shapuh Bagratuni, and his sister, Mariam, built a magnificent house of God in the name of Saint Gregory the Illuminator in the Vanevan valley [g225], which now is called Kt'anots'. [Shapuh] beautifully embellished it and gave many gifts to the brothers and established a home for clerics. Here is the text [of Shapuh's] inscription:

[97] "In the name of God, I, Shapuh Bagratuni, *sparapet* of the Armenians, lord of lords, son of Ashot, king of the Armenians, in the time of the great Armenian king Smbat, my own brother german, during the superintendency of the Armenians of the patriarch Lord Yovhanne's, realized that all glory and greatness fades away and is soon lost. Taking as overseer and supervisor my sister Mariam, the lady of Siwnik' who fervently desired it, at Vane'vank' in my own principality I built a house of God of polished and dressed stones with great expense and labor. [This was done] so that, perhaps, I would find mercy on that day when words have been exhausted and deeds alone reign

supreme. I bid you, Father Abraham, abbot of Vane'vank' monastery, to pray and enjoy this church—you and those who succeed you. And you, priests at the altar, when you gather to pray and eat the bread of immortality remember me and mine so that merciful God has mercy on us. I give the land of five villages [for the upkeep of the church]: Kot'ak'ar, Aghaboy-vank', Shawar'nahogh [g226], Getame'j, Kt'anots', as well as the lake of Getavanats', 260 *drams* from Kot'ak'ar, 530 *drams* from Brteneats', 660 *drams* from the saltworks, 990 *drams* [income] from the rivers and boats of Karbi. Let no one dare to challenge this. Should that happen, may they be anathematized by the 318 patriarchs and share the lot of Judas. [Done] in the year 352 of the Armenian Era [A.D. 903]."

Buried there are the blessed Lord Sagho'mo'n and Lord At'anas and Smbat Bagratuni. Some years later Gagik, son of Ashot *shahnshah*, renovated the marvellous holy cathedral church of Vane'vank' and gave Deghdzanaget to it. He secured the church by surrounding it with walls and wrote an inscription cursing anyone daring to alienate it from the blessed church. Let this information be sufficient for you about the praiseworthy deeds of the princes, the construction of churches, and their legacies. For they built not only these churches but many others in the land of Sisakan and in the Ararat district. Later, in the proper place, I shall tell about the very great deeds of construction and the building of awe-inspiring churches undertaken by the great royal princes of Siwnik's lordship—by Ashot and his son Smbat and many others. Now let me turn and discuss the sequence of princes and [g227] the calamitous disasters inflicted on our land by the antichrist Yusup'.

[98]

### 38.

***The coming of Yusup' to our Sisakan land; the ravaging and destruction of the district; the flight of the princes; the universal crises and conflagration of divine anger; the martyr's death of King Smbat; the return of the captives and those who fled; and information about developments beginning from the year 358 of the Armenian Era [A.D. 909].***

In this period Yusup' rebelled against his caliph and wanted to clash with him. Consequently, the caliph sent King Smbat for him to assemble a strong force and go against Yusup' in Atrpatakan. Smbat agreed and assembled troops. But he secretly alerted Yusup' with news of what had transpired. [Yusup'] was suspicious of his friendship and simultaneously was nursing a bitter grudge in his heart, just waiting for an opportune moment. And so he devised a scheme and made peace with the caliph. Intending to rule over Armenia, [Yusup'] raised an army and prepared to come [g228] to the land of Armenia in springtime. It was at this point that Ashot, the great *naxarar* and crown prince of Siwnik', departed this world after displaying many feats of bravery and noteworthy deeds, expressing his devotion by the construction of churches and monasteries.

Shushan, [Ashot's] devoted wife and an incomparable woman, adorned his body in a royal fashion. A great crowd of folk, accompanied with drums, horns, and plaintive stringed instruments, took and buried his body at the episcopate of Tat'ev at the door of the holy church which Lord Yovhanne's had built at [Ashot's] command. King Smbat and all the princes of the Armenians came to the funeral. Weeping and mourning greatly, they consoled the lady [Shushan] and her sons—Smbat, Sahak, Babge'n, and Vasak. And they established Smbat as the crown prince of Siwnik' and lord of the entire Sisakan land. Now it happened that when the door of spring opened, a bitter wind blew and stoked the furnace in the southern part of our land. The uncaged wild beast—the mad dog, Yusup'—emerged from his lair and wanted to gobble up all the Armenians. He reached Naxjawan at time of holy Easter, and spread about raiding. He wanted to destroy the district of Siwnik' and to seize [g229] the prince. Now Smbat, the crown prince of Siwnik', assembled his

brothers and relations and all the noble troops in his domain and arose and went in advance of the Ishmaelites. They seized the passes and defiles of the roads and killed many of them.

**[99]** However, since protection from On High had forsaken us and wanted to betray us [to the enemy], nothing helped [the Armenians] and they were unable to resist. [Smbat] took and secured in the inaccessible fortress of Ernjak: his mother, Shushan, and his wife, Sop'i—who was the daughter of Derenik, sister of Gagik, who was ruling as king in Vaspurakan—with a little boy at her breast, and the wife of his brother Sahak, who was daughter of the *bdeshx* of Gugark'. And they themselves fled. Smbat went to his father-in-law, Gagik, in Vaspurakan and Sahak went to his father-in-law in Gugark'. But Babge'n and Vasak remained where they were. As for Grigor Sup'an and his brothers, they remained fortified in their places on the peaks of mountains, and in the valleys and crevices of the rocks. Seeing this, the accursed Yusup' spread around raiding through the entire district. They took booty and a multitude of captives; indeed, they took everyone they found. Later they selected from them the useful and the beautiful and led them into slavery. The others they put to the sword. These were the days of the feast of holy Easter [g230] when the blood of an uncountable number of the slain mingled with the redeeming blood of our Savior Jesus Who shed His blood that day on the Cross. On that day they received the martyr's crowns. This occurred in 358 of the Armenian Era [A.D. 909].

The accursed Yusup', having wrought all these crimes, remained there for 12 days and then went to the city of Dvin. There with his enormous army he camped on the banks of the Arax River. As for Grigor Sup'an, the prince of Siwnik', when he realized that all means of salvation had been exhausted and that he had no hope of aid from any other quarter, he went to Yusup' to surrender, thinking thereby to avoid the evil attacks. When Yusup' saw him he was overjoyed and, dissembling for the present, ostensibly received him with love. Now when Grigor's relative, the young Vasak, learned that Grigor had been honored and not harmed, he, too, arose from their fortress and went to Yusup' to surrender. He also was received [with honor] at first, but after a short while he was put into detention in the city of Dvin where he remained for a year. As for the accursed Yusup', he spent an entire year waging numerous battles with King Smbat trying to catch him, but without success. All this was the result of the rebellion of the princes who, by renouncing unity and seduced by false hopes, had plunged themselves and the land [g231] of the Armenians into darkness. I am especially referring to Gagik Artsrunik', who ruled as king over Vaspurakan. [Gagik] had allied with Yusup's scheme over a trifling matter, since he had requested that King Smbat take Naxjawan from Prince Smbat of Siwnik' and give it to him. [King Smbat] refused since that was his native patrimony, and, because of this, [Gagik] had rebelled and had gone to Yusup'. Putting a crown on himself, he wanted to reign over all the Armenians. Also going to Yusup' was King Smbat's brother, Ashot, who submitted to him. Then Smbat's son, Mushegh, was captured in battle.

**[100]** Thus pridefully inflated, [Yusup'] came to Dvin, having Grigor Sup'an with him. Now it happened that because of some suspicions, he did not want to openly deceive the great prince of Siwnik'. Consequently, he thought only of getting rid of him and finally gave him a deadly poison which released his bowels and caused him to die in excruciating pain. He was mourned by King Gagik and Ashot Bagratuni along with his mother, Mariam, and brothers, Sahak and Vasak. They took and laid his body in a tomb at the church of Saint Shimona which he himself had built. Mushegh also was given the same poison. They took his body to Taron and laid it with his forebears. They also killed Smbat, the brother's son [g232] of King Smbat. As for the charming youth Vasak, brother of Smbat lord of Siwnik', the accursed Yusup' had kept him in prison for more than a year for refusing to submit to his wicked will. Now one evening [Vasak] invoked divine assistance, crossed himself and said: "Help me, O churches of Siwnik'!" And then, putting his steel sword to work, he killed the guards. After this, running quickly, he descended the wall. Mounting the horse which his servants had waiting, [Vasak] fled.

Now with the shouts of the guards and the clamor of pursuers growing louder behind him, [Vasak] fled here and there through vineyards and, by taking unusual routes, he arrived at the fastness of his own land. And then the Hayk-descended princes of Siwnik', the brothers of Grigor called Sup'an, Sahak and Vasak with their mother, the venerable Lady Mariam, wanted to escape from the clutches of the infidels and flee. They wanted to stay in the security of their own land until the wrath of the Lord passed, rather than to become exiles. And so, with swords in hand, they went by boats and holed up on the island in Lake Sevan. When Yusup' heard about this [g233], he sent a force after them which came and camped opposite the island. **[101]** [The fugitives], fearing that by some means these villains might find a way to seize them and plunge them into the abyss, embarked at night in many boats and crossed to the other side, to the secure district of Miap'o'r. Learning about this, that army again pursued them. But first they landed on the island and completely looted it. When the [Armenian] princes saw this onslaught of brigands, they turned back and, with great bravery, killed many and put the others to flight. Then they themselves crossed into the secure land of Gardman and Artsakh where they remained awaiting visitation from On High. It was here, wandering in exile, that death came to the venerable Lady Mariam, their mother. They put her body into a wooden coffin with incense and myrrh and kept it until the day of [the divine] visitation and their return to their patrimonial principality, just as the bones of Joseph were kept by the Israelites in Egypt and then brought to the Promised Land. When that day dawned, they brought their mother in glorious honor and, with a crowded and dignified ceremony, laid her to rest close to the church which she herself had built in Shoghuag.

The accursed Yusup' left Dvin after a few days, and again began to hunt [g234] King Smbat. [Smbat] had holed up in a stronghold called Kapoyt [Blue] in Ashorneat's valley. Yusup', using stratagems and vows, was able to get him out. Taking [Smbat], he went to Dvin where, lifting the veil from his pretexts, he put him in evil iron fetters. Then taking him along, [Yusup'] went to battle against the impregnable fortress of Ernjak. [It was in this fortress that] the venerable women of Siwnik were—Shushan and Sop'i and many other noblewomen and folk. He waged furious battle against the fortress for many days, intensifying his various methods but without success. Enraged, [Yusup'] had the king brought opposite the fortress, tortured him wickedly and ordered: "Tell them to open the fortress gates." But the king, seeing that his misfortune was without remedy, remained silent. Then after torturing the blessed King Smbat more than a man could bear, they killed him and had his corpse taken to Dvin where it was hanged on a gallows. A heavenly light testified to his martyrdom. Great healings took place, and many believed in Christ. This occurred in 362 of the Armenian Era [A.D. 913].

**[102]** The accursed [Yusup'], having committed this great and horrific crime, still was not satisfied with the evils already perpetrated. Now he wanted to pour his venom on the refugees in the fortress [g235]. Therefore he did not leave the place. One night, under cover of darkness, he was able to take that fortress using men skilled in grappling in caves with iron hooks. However, although they took [the fortress], it was not through human cunning but because the Lord had given it up, wishing its destruction. They opened the doors of the fortress and brought out the high ranking women with the great lot of treasure stored there. The [other] inhabitants of the fortress were put to the sword. As for the great and pious Lady Shushan, wife of Ashot and mother of Smbat and others, and Sop'i, wife of Smbat and sister of King Gagik with one small boy, and the wife of Sahak and other noblewomen, [Yusup'] took them into captivity and led them to Dvin where he put them into a narrow and dark prison. It was a heart-rending spectacle to see these delicate royal women not having enough water or dry bread to fill them and, [who were accustomed to sleeping] on beds of sweet down covered with delicate fabrics woven with gold thread, now without even a mattress to cover the grass floor.

**[103]** When this dreadful news reached Smbat in Vaspurakan and Sahak in Gugark', they tried by every means possible to free the captives, but unsuccessfully. Pious, devout, and wise Lady Shushan died a pitiful death [g236] in the jail there, as did the tiny suckling babe of Sop'i and Smbat. The guards removed their bodies from the prison and dumped them outside. The priests and the people took them like strangers and laid them to rest in the city at the door of the holy church built by Nerse's Shinogh [the Builder] named after the

martyr Sargis. As for the two women, the wives of Smbat and Sahak, they were taken to Persia, to Atrpatakan, and imprisoned in secure fortresses there. After all these events, Ashot, who was Smbat's brother's son, held the supreme command of the army (*asparapetut'iwn*). At the same time Smbat's son, [also named] Ashot, who had fled to the [Byzantine] emperor Romanus and had been crowned by him, was sent back to Armenia by Romanus. *Sparapet* Ashot was angered by this, and the two of them greatly wanted to fight. However, the great *kat'oghikos* Yovhanne's convinced them [not to] and made peace. And at the same time our land recovered a bit from the banditry of Yusup'.

In this period Smbat, the great prince of Siwnik', came to Vaspurakan to the crown prince Ashot, the king's son, who received him with great respect and glorified him with various splendid honors. Vasak, the brother of Grigor Sup'an also arrived there and Ashot also received him with great delight and established him in his lordship. After a short while the refugees Sahak, lord of Siwnik' and Babge'n and Vasak, Smbat's [g237] brothers, returned to their native land of Siwnik'. When Smbat heard about this, he received an order from the king and returned from Mount Aragats. He arrived and found his brothers, and there was great joy among them. But when they observed the spectacle of their demolished palaces, and ruined churches, their great hamlets and beautiful estates uninhabited and deserted, the grainaries empty and the vineyards disturbed, there was great sorrow, lamenting, and tears among them. And the mourning was even greater for their captured women. Yet just then, through divine mercy, their women returned to them, having been freed from Yusup's bitter captivity. **[104]** Then, in a transport of joy, they offered great thanks to God Who was the bestower of this gift. From then on, instead of sighs and lamentations, great joy reigned among them. Their ruined palaces were promptly restored to their previous state of comfort. Sahak, the brother of Grigor and Vasak also returned to his patrimonial inheritance in Gegham, but after living a short while he died. He was laid to rest in the tomb he had built at the door of the great church in Noratus.

After a short while [Sahak's] brother Vasak became alarmed about the divided kingdom of the Armenians, which was held by the two [g238] Ashots who were always inciting each other to war. [Vasak] distrusted the crown prince Ashot and did not go to him. For one thing, he liked the other Ashot, Shapuh's son; for another, he was the son-in-law of Gurgen, the *bdeshx* of Iberia/Georgia and Gurgen was against that Ashot [the crown prince]. Then *Kat'oghikos* Yovhanne's became involved. He sought a sworn testament and oath guaranteeing that he might openly and without suspicion go before him. This was granted by Ashot the king's crown prince], respecting his stated intentions. Vasak, taking this written pledge from the *kat'oghikos* then went to Ashot who received him with frank cordiality as though he were a dear colleague. But later, aroused by people who told him that "Vasak has received letters from the other King Ashot and his stepfather, Gurgen, full of malice toward you," Ashot had Vasak seized, placed in iron fetters, and confined in the secure fortress of Kayen. Now despite the many efforts of the *kat'oghikos* to have him freed, [Ashot did not free Vasak, and] kept making excuses. But after some days he was freed by force by Sahak, prince of Dzoroyget and Gardman, and sent to his home in the district of Gardman. For this was his share of the inheritance in the land of Sisakan [g239].

**[105]** After these events, the great prince of Sisak, Smbat, together with his three brothers, grew angry and quarreled with the emir of Goght'n, who at that time held by force the district of Goght'n. They requested that he give up their own patrimonial district of Ernjak and the surrounding districts which Yusup' had entrusted to him. But the emir of Goght'n refused, saying: "This was a gift to me from the court." When Smbat heard this he assembled troops to fight with great ferocity, taking along with him the Scythian Turks who dwelled in tents on his land. The emir arose before them. After clashing with each other, the Hagarenes were defeated. But then those Turks who held the left flank behind Vasak conceived a diabolical plan. Together they attacked and killed Vasak and then fled off in the direction of Naxjawan. With endless mourning and sobbing, the brothers took the body of the handsome young man from the field of battle and placed it by his father, Ashot, after prolonged mourning.

Now I shall tell about Yusup'. After he [g240] had wrought all these crimes against our land of Armenia, he went to Atrpatakan. And then he began a rebellion against the caliph. When the latter learned about his perfidy, he assembled many troops, placed them under a faithful commander, and sent them against Yusup'. They caught him, put him into evil fetters and brought him before the caliph. He was beaten a good deal, put into shackles, and thrown into a dark, narrow, and dirty prison. He remained there for some years. Then, at the suggestion of some chief of their loathsome religion, he was released from jail. He was returned to the same seat of authority that he held previously and sent back, charged with collecting taxes from the Armenians. After arriving in Vaspurakan he went to Atrpatakan. He established as *ostikan* ("governor") over the Armenians one of his servants who was named Nsr and also called Se"be"k'. This accursed man, who was twice as bad as the doglike Yusup', dwelled for a few days in Naxjawan. At this time tranquility and mutual satisfaction prevailed among the princes of Siwnik', Smbat and Sahak. They had divided their patrimonial inheritance of the land, with the senior Smbat holding the greater part of Siwnik' including the western part and all of Vayots' Dzor. Sahak's portion included the eastern parts as far as Hakari. However, the little Babge'n had little in his domain. Consequently, the demon of envy led him to believe that he had been deprived [g241] of a larger lordship by Sahak. Encouraged in this vain hope by wicked men, he arose and went to Naxjawan to the aforementioned Nsr. And so, making a pact with the devil, he described to him his deprivation by Sahak.

**[106]** [Nsr] for the moment duplicitously accepted [Babge'n], promising to achieve what he wanted and meanwhile striving to get his brother to come there. Thus he sent a message to Sahak bidding him to come in friendship. Sahak, misled by a foolish confidence, believed him and happily went at this summons as though going to the royal court, bearing many and great presents. [Nsr] in Naxjawan also received [Sahak] with joy, delighted at the ease with which he had caught such great prey. Once Sahak had made a trustworthy agreement with him, Nsr said: "Let us go to Dvin where we can safely deliberate about our mutual interests." And thus, taking Sahak and Babge'n along, he went on to Dvin. As soon as he had entered the city and arrived at his palace—which was a prison—he pushed aside the veil of his wickedness. He seized Sahak and Babge'n, put them into iron fetters, and threw them into prison, these two who were so bereft of reason, so stupid, that they foolishly and voluntarily betrayed themselves.

With this done Nsr, after a few days [g242], arose and spread his troops throughout the entire country raiding and looting, and totally wrecking the entire land of Armenia as well as three of the Araratian districts. Laden with booty and captives he came and settled at Dvin. Then an order came from Yusup' to Nsr that he should go to Atrpatakan. At once [Nsr] went to Persia, to Atrpatakan, after designating one of his faithful servants named Bshr over the bound Sisakan princes who were at Dvin. Thereafter, working for many days on all royal concerns, he returned with an enormous army. It was his intention to go to the Sisakan areas and sack the land and, if possible, capture the great crown prince of Siwnik', Smbat. He might do this by surprise like a thief, or in combat with a sword, like a man. Then he would lay waste his House and take him as a captive to his brothers in Dvin. But the great and wise Smbat, who lived peacefully in his own patrimonial district of Vayots' Dzor, heard news of the march against him. He secured his House and all [the folk] of the district in the secure fortress of Vayots' Dzor. Then he moved his troops and many detachments of his forces and deployed them surrounding himself in his royal palace, which was located in the town of Eghegik [g243].

**[107]** Nsr arrived. Seing [that Smbat] was so prepared and had such a renowned military force as a precaution, he was unable to accomplish his plans. Rather, he spoke to him about peace and after many messages, established an oath of peace and friendship with him. Smbat also requested his brothers who were held in bonds at Dvin, and [Nsr] also pledged to release them. Then they met one another [in person] joyfully and Nsr, after receiving many gifts and presents from Smbat, returned to Dvin. There, after being paid a rich ransom by Babge'n, he let him go. However, he kept Sahak there since he lacked the large sum of *dahekans* demanded for his ransom.

After a short while [Sahak] paid a large amount of gold and was released from bondage. He arose and came to his own lordship, and there was great joy for the brothers and the land. They lived in peace, occupying themselves with construction and praiseworthy deeds. In these days there also flourished their relation, who was one of the princes of the line of Sisak, the great prince Dzagik, a most pious man. He held as his portion the district of Baghk and the city of Kapan. [Dzagik] died after a life of many [g244] good deeds, and was laid to rest with his fathers. He left as heirs the valiant Jevanshe'r and Vahan. Jevanshe'r inherited his lordship and ruled for many years. But his brother Vahan was suddenly stricken by an evil *dev* and was tormented. As a result, he withdrew from worldly matters and donned religious garb. Then he engaged in rigorous ascetic practises for a long time in that blessed repository of virtue, Tandzap'arax, and at Shatania monastery where he engaged in severe vigils of uninterrupted prayer. When he had been cleansed of the foul spirit, he wanted to build a monastery in his own name and establish in it a multitude of clerics. I shall discuss this later. Now as for the fortunate and glorious prince Smbat, after a life of God-pleasing piety, he passed from this world and was buried near his father Ashot. He left his brave and bright son, prince Vasak, as his heir.

[108]

### 39.

#### ***Concerning the episcopacy of Tat'ev, the blessed Cross and other holy things; and about the succession of patriarchs.***

After this lengthy description of the succession of princes [g245], let us turn and briefly discuss matters pertaining to the bishops, their words and deeds, the construction of the blessed episcopate of Tat'ev and the gifts of princes [to it]. To begin, it originally was the rule that bishops should reside in cities and populated areas, for a shepherd must dwell among his flock and not in some corner. In this way [the bishop] with an inner eye can watch over that flock so that no wily deceiver enter and steal innocent souls and seduce them away from the flock. Subsequently, there were some [clerics] who, because of their inclinations, tended toward asceticism and longed for retreats. [Such clerics], being chaste of eye and ear, thought it appropriate to reside in monasteries, emerging at appropriate times to counsel the flock. This was the case here in our lands where the bishops of Sisakan circulated around through the districts and the homes of the princes, always tirelessly preaching the Word of Life. Their residence was in Siwnik'. But later, with their pious and modest ways, they were not able to stand against the crowd and the endless traffic that surrounded them in the theater of this [urban] life. And so they found a place very suitable and advantageous and, as though guided by divine inspiration, they came to settle in this beautiful spot. [The place they chose] was like a [g246] lofty watchtower which seems to be looking to the East, facing many districts and opposite the Dizap'ayl Mountains, where many blessed martyrs are buried. The location is very healthful, level, and surrounded by tall mountain peaks, forming a sort of semicircle, as though drawn with a compass.

[109] In front of the monastery are valleys and deep ravines, very expansive and lovely, through which the Orotan River passes with an awesome roar. The valley is full of vineyards and fragrant gardens which makes it a paradise. Now perched there on a very high rock was an obscure church—built of undressed stones cemented with lime and dating from very ancient times, from the period of Saints Nerse's and Sahak. A few clerics dwelled there, practising continual austerities. The place was far from the raiding of enemies, in a peaceful part of the land also defended by being situated between the two royal seats of Siwnik' and Baghk'. The bishops of Siwnik' had requested this place from the princes, and came and dwelled there. They brought with them [a fragment of] the blessed life-bringing Cross which had been touched by God. This had been brought from Greek [Byzantine] territory by former princes and entrusted to the bishops of Siwnik'. They placed this [relic] in the Holy Church [g247]. Also deposited here was the Babgenean Cross fashioned of silver by Vasak, son of Andok, son of Babik. It was the height of a man and also contained a fragment of the redeeming Cross. They had also brought [and placed there] relics of apostles, patriarchs, martyrs, important

and prominent saints which had been gathered in a countless multitude by the princes of Siwnik'—who had accompanied Saint Gregory and Saint Nerse's to Caesarea and the great Rome as well as in other periods—relics collected with great fervor. Among other relics were those of the great John [the Baptist] and the protomartyr Stephen, the Twelve Apostles, Saint Gregory, the right hand and other parts of the body of the blessed Hr'ip'sime', as well as countless others. There were also hairs from [the head of] the blessed Mother of God, who stood above ordinary humans.

All of these were brought and placed in the Holy Church which became a rich treasury of divinity. However, I was unable to discover who the first bishop here was, and when that was. It is only from [the time of] Lord Ge'org and onward that I found some clues and could acquaint myself with all their vicissitudes. But as for the oldest of them, I know nothing since there are no memorials. Nonetheless, I do know that they lived here from a very ancient period. After Lord Ge'org, bishop of [g248] Siwnik', [reigned] that venerable man of God, Dawit', who lived in the time of Grigor, the senior prince of Siwnik' and the other Grigor, Sahak's son, who was nicknamed Sup'an and ruled Geghark'unik', the first Sup'an, as well as the God-preserved Lord P'ilippe', Vasak's son, who was patriarch of the entire line of Sisakan. He was the father of the great princes Vasak called *Ishxanik* and Ashot, father of Smbat, the great senior prince of Siwnik'.

**[110]** Since the boundaries of the monastery of Tat'ev were narrow and limited, and thus inadequate for the needs of a see, Lord Dawit' begged the God-protected P'ilippe', lord of Siwnik', to provide money to purchase the adjacent lands. [P'ilippe'] granted this request. Taking 10,000 *drams*, each of which equals 6 *danks*, he handed over to him the village of Artsiw and that of Berdkanere'ch' above the monastery along with its waterfall, free from all wordly taxes and requisitions. They wrote an eternal deed and signed it with their rings. Here is its text:

I, Lord Dawit', by the grace of God bishop of Siwnik', in the year 288 of the Armenian Era [A.D. 839] purchased from Lord P'ilippe', son of Vasak and lord of Siwnik', Artsiw including in its borders the mountains and plains, dry and wet places, arable land, fields and [g249] meadows. Here are the borders: eastward in a straight line going between Harzhik' and Berdkanere'ch' and then cut by the river, from there by a flat-topped hill at the entrance of the village beyond to Sterjats' *gawak*, including the waterfall, then to the valley of Vardanamarg; from there to Artsiwakatar; on the west Lordadzor with its big mountain; on the south Harzhik' as far as Sewajur, following the natural line of the road; and north to the mountain to Vanats'dzor. I, Lord P'ilippe', received from Lord Dawit', bishop of Siwnik', 10,000 *drams* [as payment] and with the Holy Cross confirmed that village with its borders which are mentioned in the deed [as part of the purchase]. [Done] having as witnesses Atrnerse'h, lord of Siwnik', son of Vasak; Lord Hrahat, son of Lord Sahak; Lord Atrnerse'h, son of Lord Vardan; Arshak, son of Vahan; R'abbe', son of Sargis, the father of Sargis, the father of Ge'org and Markos, the senior priest. I, Lord P'ilippe', gave half of Berdkanerich' in exchange for Sar'nak'ar and half to the Holy Church. Let no one dare to stray from this [agreement], neither my own brother, nor son, nor other descendants. Should anyone dispute these boundaries, may such a one be judged by God and may God demand from him [responsibility for] my own sins, nor may [the challenger] succeed in his case.

**[111]** The boundaries are these: from Tsiranahogh down [g250] to the river, [from Tsiranahogh] upward to Katar, from the river to Seneak, through Seneak to the valley, and from there also to Gawak. We, Lord Dawit' and Lord P'ilippe', have signed this deed with our signet rings."

Then there is written in his own hand: "I, P'ilippe', son of Vasak, lord of Siwnik' wished to confirm this deed with my own signature." Now five years later this same P'ilippe', in an act befitting his great faith and deep piety, wished to enrich the monastery of Tat'ev. Thinking about eternity, he wanted to invigorate his entire existence by uniting his soul with the Holy Church and the Blessed Cross. Through Lord Dawit', he offered to

the Holy Church his greatest gift, his own village of Tat'ev. [This was done] with an irrevocable act of donation, to remain intact until the coming of Christ. The text of the document follows:

"In the year 293 of the Armenian Era [A.D. 844/45], I, P'ilippe, son of Vasak, lord of Siwnik' gave to you, Lord Dawit', bishop of Siwnik', for my soul Tat'ev, which [property] had come to me from my father as my legacy. [I give it] unconditionally with all its boundaries, mountains, plains, vineyards, walnut trees, fields, mills, and everything else contained therein. After my passing let no one, neither my sons, brothers, or stewards [g251], dare to remove this village from the Church and its Holy Cross, on pain of being cursed by God, the blessed Church and the Holy Cross, and you, our spiritual lord. From the depths of my heart I give all this to you, Lord Dawit', bishop of Siwnik', and to those who succeed you, to enjoy until the coming of Christ. If they stay here, let it be so. And if they depart, let no one dare to alienate the village and its borders from the church, not to sell, exchange, or pledge it. It is, with all its borders, for the servants of the church. May [the following] be witnesses: the God-protected Lord Grigor, lord of Siwnik', lord Atrnerse'h, Vasak's son, lord of Siwnik', Lord Grigor, Sahak's son, Lord Hrahat and Lord Aruman, Sahak's son, Lord Hrahat and Lord Gagik, sons of Grigor, lord of Siwnik', and Lord Vahan, Vardan's son. Similarly [as witnesses] from my *azats* ("nobles") Hur', K'urdoy, and Xosrov, Shapuh's sons, Jewanshe'r, son of T'e'odoros, Ashnak, son of Vahan, Dzagik, son of Vahan, Vardan, son of Javad, Sahak, son of Vasak, Mihran, son of T'urk', Yovhan, son of Nerse'h, Mushegh, Lord Tirots' son, Hasan, Shapuh's son, Vahan, Mxit'ar's son, Lord Mushegh, Smbat's son, Lord Vahan, Babgen's son, Lord Babgen, Lord [g252] Vasak, and Lord Ashot, sons of my P'ilippe. [As witnesses] from the clergy: Aharon, the monk from Erits'u [monastery] and Grigor the priest, Step'annos the monk from Mak'enots' [monastery], Yakob the senior priest from Uyts, Mankik the chorepiscopus of Tsghuk, Step'annos the monk from Tsitsar'navank, the court priest Grigor, the monk Sime'on from Shaghat [monastery] and Grigor, *vardapet* of Siwnik'. For added authority I have stamped this with my own ring; and the seals of my sons and other nobles are also affixed."

**[112]** Thus having written this and sealed it with their rings, they put [the document] in the blessed church. The seal on the parchments was made by six signet rings, of the grandee princes, for added authenticity. When this was seen by the great prince Hrahat, who was Sahak's son, and Grigor, Aruman's brother, Haykids (*haykazni*) from the same line of Sisakan, whose inheritance included Kavsakan district and K'ashunik', he was filled with zeal. [Hrahat] came to Lord Dawit' and donated the village of Norashinik in Kavsakan district out of his own patrimonial holdings. He wrote an unbreakable deed for the property with the following conditions:

"In 293 of the Armenian Era [A.D. 844] in the time of Bishop Lord Dawit' of Siwnik', a spiritual man honored by God, I, the sinful Hrahat, son of Lord Sahak— for my bad and [g253] unjust deeds and the many sins I committed under the leadership of Satan, crimes as vast as the sea which I did without thinking of my salvation on the terrible Day of Judgement, pondering the fact that I have no sons, and no hope for the salvation of my soul, and realizing also that all humans are mortal—have taken refuge in and adopted instead of children the Holy Cross of God. And so, for my soul, I have given to the Holy Cross a village named Norashinik in the district of Kavsakan. [This property] which I own not by theft or by depriving someone unfairly, was acquired through legitimate work and with money. [I give it] with all that is in its borders—the mountains and plains, the hot and cold places, and the trees and plants. Here are its borders: on the east, Toruanot; on the north, Tsobi; on the west, Tri and Artauazuts'; on the south, Keren and Berk'ni. Henceforth its prince is you, Lord Dawit', bishop of Siwnik' and those who succeed you as patriarchs on your [ecclesiastical] throne, one after the other. [This village is yours] to enjoy, to eat its produce, to possess it, to sell or to pledge it, and whatever else you choose for all eternity. Henceforth neither I, Hrahat, nor my brothers, nor their sons have the authority [g254] to dispute or contest [these provisions]. But should

someone be brazen enough to disturb the servants of the Holy Cross, may God curse him and may the Holy Cross condemn him, may the blessings of the earth be withheld from such a one and may he not succeed in his suit. I, Lord Hrahat, son of Lord Sahak give this deed to you, Lord Dawit', bishop of Siwnik' having as witnesses Lord Yakob the monk of Var'i, and Yovhann's and Smbat, sons of Nerse'h, Yovhann's, son of Babik, Step'annos and Mushegh, sons of Lord Tirots', Vizhan, son of Varaztirots', E'r'andzar, Grigor's son, Xudap', son of Yovhann, Hamazasp, son of Sahak, Barsegh, the priest of Mar'akats, Sadok, son of Mxit'ar, E'ghuerts the priest, Hmayek, priest of Vanand, Sahak and Aharon, priests of Norik, and Mat'osagha, son of Yakob the senior priest of Uyts. I, Lord Hrahat, have sealed this document with my usual signet ring and, for additional authenticity, I had it stamped with the seal of Lord Grigor, lord of Siwnik'. May God give you to enjoy it, forever."

**[113]** The venerable and glorious Prince P'ilippe' built another beautiful church near the old church [g255] on the south side in the name of the blessed Illuminator, Gregory. When he died he was buried by its door. May his memory be blessed and may his name be written in the Book of Life. This was in the year 297 of the Armenian Era [A.D. 848]. Now Bishop Dawit' greatly wanted to make a permanent memorial expressing his gratitude, and he wrote an inscription which we feel obliged to reproduce here. Even though it has become degraded over a long time and despite the fact that the donations and the episcopate have undergone changes, nonetheless, so that it not be obliterated entirely, let me now restore its memory. This is what had been written:

"I, Dawit', bishop of Siwnik', chose to provide for the salvation of the soul of the God-protected Lord P'ilippe', and to make it worthy of illumination and eternal life and immortality. For he had, voluntarily, chosen me as his refuge and intercessor with God for the life to come. Every mortal man is trapped in sin by his desires. Indeed, in the words of a wise man, there is no man who does not sin. Moreover, none of us born of earth, can attain true holiness or perfect justice regardless of the number of virtuous deeds performed [g256]. I leave aside mention of those who have demonstrated perfection and perseverance in piety. However, he submitted to the advice I gave him and he performed many good works, which makes me believe that the Lord will give him a full pardon. Death, which is the common end to our mortal lives, overtook him and did not allow him to attain complete purification by repentance and remorse, and through the building of various religious structures. **[114]** All his good works were thus halted. Indeed, I am greatly troubled by this. However, through a kind of divine inspiration, considering what he deserved through infinite grateful gifts to the Holy Church, or through donations of land and goods and his many other sterling deeds, to honor his memory in this blessed place I have stipulated the following: that each of you clerics who reside in the blessed church of the monastery of Tat'ev celebrate an obligatory quarantine for the salvation of his soul; and each day, in the place I have designated, without resistance, recite the psalm 'Blessed are those who have obtained remission of their sins' and also say sixty times 'Lord, have mercy' [g257]. Moreover, you must remember him with a service on the anniversary of his death, which is on the 15th day of [the month of] *k'aghots'*. And thereby he may escape the dreadful punishment [of God]. Those who fulfill my command and with sincere charity perform these spiritual exercises will, with their prayers accepted by God, protect the prince in the eyes of Christ and become worthy of eternal joy and forgiveness before the awful tribunal. May Christ bless those who implement my instructions and may He cause to increase all their virtuous spiritual deeds so that, after a lifetime spent in this world practising such virtues, God will make you a participant in the real, ineffable, and incorruptible world to come along with all His saints and executors of His will, giving you a crown which never fades, and admitting you to their radiant altars. As for those who violate my reasonable and righteous commandments and who trample on them, regarding them as contemptible and worthless, and also for those who fail to fulfill the obligations I have stipulated, may Christ demand from them the full weight of their carnal sinfulness. As for their prayers, may they be transformed into sins as Scripture says. Instead of a good [g258] reward at the terrible coming of the Divine Word, they, for their disobedience, will receive punishment without end and

without consolation. And now, o blessed priests and monastic clerics, I have sealed this work of remembrance for added future authenticity with my usual signet ring, in 297 of the Armenian Era [A.D. 848]."

Lord Dawit' died after so enhancing the [ecclesiastical] throne and after wise administration. He was succeeded by Lord Yovhanne's, who was followed by Lord Sagho'mo'n.

[115]

---

## 40.

### ***Concerning Lord Sagho'mo'n and the legacy given to the Holy Church during his tenure.***

The venerable Sagho'mo'n surpassed all the other ascetics in virtue. He, who cast out demons and healed the sick, was therefore seated on the episcopal throne of Siwnik', ordained by the *kat'oghikos* of the Armenians, Lord Zak'aria. Through great labors he embellished the holy throne with various regulations. Now it happened that he discovered a fragment of the Cross which had born God and which was dyed with the blood [g259] of Jesus, and which effected great and astounding miracles. He had some highly skilled craftsmen fashion a cross of gold adorned with precious stones and pearls and placed the wood[en fragment of the Cross] inside it. Upon it he wrote his name and gave it to the blessed church as a gift. He also purchased some property and gave it to the Holy Cross. Then he himself drew up the following document to memorialize it.

"By the grace of God, I, Lord Sagho'mo'n, bishop of Siwnik', have drawn up this document. Some time in the past, Lord Ge'org the manager (? *kor'avar*) of Xot, gave this blessed Cross as a spiritual gift to [the church], but for some reason it was stolen. Now when I succeeded to the holy [ecclesiastical] throne, I acquired this blessed relic which has touched God, for the salvation of my wretched soul. Then I received [the village of] Daratap' from Hrahat, lord of Siwnik', son of Grigor the prince of princes through the legitimate fruit of my labors—not as a spiritual gift or as first fruits—rather, I purchased it for 1,200 *drams*. I made this the hereditary property of the Holy Cross. Now you who succeed me in the holy monastic complex, remember me, Sagho'mo'n in your blessed prayers and may God grant you enjoyment. The boundaries of Daratap' are as described in the deed. Additionally, it includes three *dur* [?] parcels] of land in front of Aghbi village. I, Grigor, lord of Xot, Vasak's son, am a witness. I, Vardik, son of [g260] T'ados, am a witness. I, Abas, son of She'rank, am a witness. I, Grigor the priest of Tashu, am a witness. I, Vard *de'hme't'an* am a witness; Abisagho'm of Berdkamerech' and Sargis of Arit and Petros the priest—we are witnesses. Ghazar of Tat'ev and Mrjmnik of K'aratnik, we are witnesses; Smbat of Ts'uraget, Bo'ghos the priest of Te'runakan, Tiranun the priest, and Aharon the priest, with God as intercessor, all the names listed above are witnesses to this decision. Now, whoever comes out in opposition to this confirmed deed regarding [the properties of] Daratap' and Aghbi, may he be condemned by God and the blessed symbol [of the Cross]. May such a one not enjoy his life and inheritance, and be ranked with Judas who sold God. May those who confirm [the deed] be blessed by God and by us. [Done] in the year 330 [of the Armenian Era (A.D. 881)]."

[116] In this period a prince of Sisakan named Jevanshe'r, son of Sahak, lord of Siwnik' came to Lord Sagho'mo'n. He requested from him the village of Bex in Kovsakan district which in ancient times had been the hereditary property of the Holy Cross and the bishops, and in exchange [he wanted] to give his own village of Aruk's in Baghk' district. The bishop agreed to this, gave Bex and took Aruk's village. And they wrote a deed with the following conditions:

"In the year 320 of the Armenian Era [A.D. 871] in the days of the God-honored [g261], spiritual Lord Sagho'mo'n, bishop of Siwnik', I, Juanshe'r, son of the God-protected Lord Sahak of Siwnik', wanted to exchange one of my hamlets named Aruk's in Baghk' district—which came to me as a legacy from my father and brothers and constitutes an undisputed part of my patrimonial inheritance—for the hamlet of Bex in Kavsakan district. The latter hamlet was the natural legacy of the Holy Cross and the bishops, the spiritual lords of Siwnik'. Lord Sagho'mo'n and I effected this exchange, by mutual agreement and consent. As this swap was done between the two of us, we have compiled this document as confirmation. Now you, Lord Sagho'mo'n, are the prince who may eat [of the victuals produced by] that hamlet of Aruk's and inherit it including all its borders, trees and vineyards, fields and meadows, rivers and dry land, mills and orchards, churches, and other buildings. It all [belongs] to you, Lord Sagho'mo'n, the spiritual lord and to whomever succeeds you on the [ecclesiastical] throne and the servants of the Holy Cross for all eternity. Hereafter let no one dare to oppose this immutable deed either from among us or from foreigners. Should people dare to attempt this, may they not win their case. May they be cursed by the three holy councils, inherit Judas' portion, and be held responsible [g262] for our own sins. Should a Tachik ("Arab") chief attempt to ravish it, may he be rejected by the laws of his Muhammad, receiving a thousand-thousand curses (*nalat'*), and may he be damned by his religion and may his face be blackened before his own God.

Here are the boundaries of Aruk's: on the east, it borders Kshnatuk'; on the west it borders the orchard of the Holy Cross itself; on the south it extends by the old water mill to the borders of Kawart. We have received Bex with its borders and royal gardens [? *nepak*] and gave Aruk's with its borders and royal gardens, worth 12 *drams*. Witnesses to this deed are Vasak, lord of Siwnik', and my brother, Aruman, and my son Tigran and other *tanute'rs* of Baghk and servants of the Holy Cross. We have stamped it with our signet rings."

[117] Then K'upghiduxt, being childless, also went to Lord Sagho'mo'n. She was the daughter of Vasak, lord of Siwnik', the sister of P'ilippe', and the wife of Prince Hrahat. She made an offering for her soul to the Holy Cross and Lord Sagho'mo'n. She wrote a deed with these provisions:

"I, K'upghiduxt, daughter of Vasak lord of Siwnik', having approached old age, regard as nothing this earthly life and wish for the Life Eternal. Now since in my physical life [g263] I was deprived of children, I have adopted as a spiritual son as the hope and refuge of my sinful soul, the Holy Cross and the blessed God-honored Lord Sagho'mo'n, bishop of Siwnik'. There is an inhabited place named Mach in the district of Baghk' which earlier Lord Atrnerse'h, the lord of Siwnik' and my brother had given me, and later my lord Hrahat purchased from my brother and sold it to me. I have given this as a spiritual donation to the church. I, K'upghiduxt, give to Lord Sagho'mo'n, bishop of Siwnik' and to the Holy Cross that village [Mach] with its mountains and plains, meadows and fields, waters, rivers and dry land, trees and plants. I entrust my soul to you. Now you are its lord, you Lord Sagho'mo'n and those who succeed you as bishops on the blessed throne of Siwnik'. I give this village to you in its entirety, to eat its produce and to enjoy it with its boundaries for all eternity. Neither I, nor my brother's sons, nor other descendants should dare to challenge or dispute this. May anyone bold enough to attempt to challenge my disposition, or invalidate my gift, be condemned by God and the Holy Cross. May such a one be cursed by the spiritual lords and be charged with all my sins and transgressions, those of my parents, and of Lord Hrahat, who was the companion of my life [g264]. May such a one be tortured in the unquenchable flame with Satan and his angels. I wrote this in the year 316 of the Armenian Era [A.D. 867] having as witnesses my brother's son, Lord Vasak and Lords Ashot, Grigor and Sahak with their *azats* and all Shne're'. For additional authenticity I put on this document the seal of the signet ring of the God-honored spiritual Lord Sago'mo'n, bishop of Siwnik'. Now should a Tachik become sovereign [over this area] and attempt to alienate this

[property] may a thousand thousand curses (*nalet'*) be upon him and may he be rejected by his Prophet [Muhammad]."

After many and great works, the blessed and venerable bishop Lord Salo'mo'n passed away. He was succeeded by the spiritual and God-honored bishop, the majestic Lord Yovhanne's. I shall now describe his praiseworthy and incomparable deeds for you [g265].

---

[118]

## 41.

### ***Concerning Lord Yovhanne's, bishop of Siwnik'; the construction of the great cathedral church at the episcopate in Tat'ev, and other construction works.***

This venerable and thrice-blessed patriarch, Lord Yovhanne's, succeeded Lord Sagho'mo'n on the throne of the metropolitanate of Siwnik'. Some say that he was the son of a poor beggar from the village of Norik. [His father] subsequently married a foolish woman who kept flocks of tame birds for the lord of the village. She behaved with malice toward her stepson, little Yovhanne's, beating and starving him. One day the lad lost many chicks from her flock and did not dare to return home. He ran away and came, under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, to the monastery of Tat'ev where he lived with a cleric. [Yovhanne's] grew in size and learning, for he was full of divine grace, and was intelligent and wise. Having proved himself worthy of divine unction, he was ordained a priest by Lord Dawit', bishop of Siwnik'. Learned in scripture [g266], he advanced to the perfection of learning, both practical and theoretical. In the time of Lord Sagho'mo'n, he became keeper of the keys at the church, and head of all the clergy in the house as well as head of the senior clerics.

At last death came to the virtuous Sagho'mo'n. The lords of Siwnik' and all their *azats*, the seniors of the monasteries in the land, the senior *tanute'rs* of the various districts gathered and buried the blessed body of the bishop, and held an election for a new patriarch. The entire assembly raised a cry, requesting for a leader Yovhanne's, the keeper of the keys. Agreeing with this, the entire multitude sent him with the greatest glory to the *kat'oghikos* of the Armenians, Lord Ge'org. Having been ordained, he returned in splendid honor and sat on the throne of the metropolitanate of our House of Sisakan. When the venerable [Yovhanne's] observed this church [at Tat'ev], dark and narrow, antiquated by the passage of time, and even shaken by an earthquake, [he realized that] it was inappropriate that such a large monastic complex where the blessed patriarchs convened assemblies should be without a cathedral church. He kept thinking about this, without finding any solution. [This was,] firstly, because he did not dare to destroy the [existing] temple founded by the saints of old [g267], and, secondly, he felt unable to provide for the huge expenditures. Then it happened that, in a vision, he was ordered by an angel to leave the old building just as it was and to begin constructing an entirely new church. This [vision] occurred a second and a third time, until the angel fully convinced [Yovhanne's] about the matter, so that he would not think it was just a dream. [The angel] with his staff traced the outlines of the place and ordered [Yovhanne's] to build [the church] there, in the name of the blessed and chief apostle Peter, the rock, and the apostle Paul. And [the angel] encouraged the work saying that it was not to be finished by man. Rather, God Himself wanted to build it as a home for His glorification.

[119] The bishop awoke from his sleep startled and frightened and remained dumbfounded for many hours. Getting up, he went to the spot and pointed out the angel's plan to the brethren. He also notified the great crown prince of Siwnik', Ashot, brother of Vasak, son of P'ilippe', and the father of Smbat, Sahak, and Babge'n and his wife, the venerable and devout Lady Shushan, and the other prince who was in the district of Gegham, Grigor Sup'an's sons Gabur' and Sahak as well as the other prince Dzagik, Jevanshe'r's father, who was in Baghk'. All of them were overjoyed and, with Divine providence, quickly took themselves there. They were all amazed [g268] at such a marvellous vision and, by common consent, put their hands to work, aiming

to complete [the church] quickly. They opened their treasuries and generously paid those working on the building. However, the chief [of the donors] was the great prince Ashot and the bishop Lord Yovhanne's who lavished enormous sums and labors on the work. By the will of God, they commenced work on the structure, laying the foundation in the year 344 of the Armenian Era [A.D. 895], during the reign of King Smbat Bagratuni, [called] the Confessor, son of King Ashot, and during the principate in Siwnik' of Ashot, son of P'ilippe', during the term as *kat'oghikos* of the Armenians of Lord Ge'org of Gar'ni, by order and will of Ashot, and by the hand of Lord Yovhanne's. Indeed, he wrote this [inscription] on the church [wall]: "In the year 344 of the Armenian Era [A.D. 895] on Easter, which fell on the fourth of [the month of] Navasard, I, Lord Yovhanne's, who succeeded Lord Sagho'mo'n as bishop of Siwnik', began the construction of this church."

And so he completed the church which has an arch resembling the sky, a dome on the roof, a true meeting place for angels and a place of atonement for men. It was made of blocks of cut and polished stones, and was a masterpiece of architecture, gorgeous to behold: 100 cubits high, 48 cubits long [g269], 24 cubits wide and containing four altars besides the principal altar. Similar to the buildings of Solomon and Zorubbabel, there were in the middle two exceedingly tall columnar supports, beautifully worked, which provided solid foundations to support the huge weight of the large stone arch which resembled the arch of the firmament. Relics of the two principal apostles, Peter and Paul, were deposited underneath the columns. Moreover, many remains of other holy men—apostles, patriarchs, martyrs—were placed in the foundation and corners of the church. When this was done, after eleven years [Lord Yovhanne's] erected a marvellous pillar in the name of the Holy Trinity, close to the church, opposite to it on the south side. It was built of small and large stones and reached a height of 30 cubits. The church was also fortified with a wall of polished stone and the monastery, with carved stones. Since the ground there was uneven, it was smoothed and levelled and walled. [Lord Yovhanne's] also had constructed many hidden rooms, underground, below the monastery. These were covered over with earth as secret storerooms for the church's needs. He levelled some areas and built dining rooms [g270], workrooms, shops, repositories for sacred objects, libraries and, near the door of the church, a chapel and burial place for the bishops and princes of Siwnik'.

**[120]** All this was arranged and planned by the great House of the Patriarch. And it made [the monastery] very desirable and attractive for those far and near in this our land of Armenia. He made it shine like the sun in the midst of the stars. Not only did this place stand out [solely] because of all its buildings, but it was conspicuous by its clergy and clerical classes, which numbered 500. It was rich in profound philosophers, skilled musicians, *vardapets*, and unequalled craftsmen of painting and calligraphy. Consequently, because of its renown, kings, princes and bishops came to see this heavenly [ecclesiastical] throne, bearing gifts. Now when the church and other buildings were finished, Bishop Lord Yovhanne's undertook to celebrate the consecration ceremony of this great and divine temple. They invited Smbat, king of the Armenians, with other princes, the *kat'oghikos* Lord Yovhanne's, who succeeded Mashtots' from the island of Sevan, and other bishops of the Armenians [g271]. Gagik of Vaspurakan, who was later king [also came] with his bishops, princes, and *azats*, as did Lord Sime'on, *kat'oghikos* of the Aghuans, with his bishops and grandee princes. Here, too, gathered all the great princes of Siwnik', descendants of Hayk, whom we mentioned earlier, as well as other monks and laity of the land of Sisakan. Indeed, among them could be seen, according to His true command, Christ with His Father and the most Holy Trinity, all the Heavenly Host, the band of Apostles with the prophets, patriarchs and martyrs. All of them appeared to the blessed Bishop Yovhanne's during the morning service, along with Peter, holding iron keys in his hand and Paul, holding the Gospel to his chest. They entered the church, prepared the heavenly King's throne, handed the keys and book to the bishop and said: "It pleases the Lord to dwell here, and we are preparing a place of rest for Him. We have been ordered to stay here until the second coming of our King. Here are the Keys to the Kingdom, to be kept in the church. For this will open the gate of Paradise for all sinners who apply to it. This book, too, shall remain here, for from it flows the grace of doctrine and sound preaching of the Holy [g272] Scriptures. Let it remain here, pure and unadulterated."

Seeing this and being greatly amazed, [Yovhanne's] in great satisfaction directed [prayers] to heaven, glorifying [God]. Now at daybreak, the blessed patriarchs and all the bishops donned their vestments and went up on the *bema* and conducted the spiritual blessing, consecrating [the church] with holy chrism. When they reached the section which says "May it be blessed and consecrated," the multitude sang with such fervor that it seemed they heard a great thundering and booming coming from the fiery clouds. It shook the earth and shook that place. It seems to me that this disembodied sound mixed with their singing, creating an extraordinary sound composed not of human voices alone. And thus, during eight days, they conducted the dedication to the glory of God. Then all returned to their homes. As for the king and the princes of Siwnik', after witnessing such a ceremony so beautifully arranged, they loved and revered that place even more. They greatly enriched [the church] with gifts and vastly expanded the boundaries of the place. This will now be described [in the next chapter] [g273].

[121]

---

## 42.

***Regarding the legacies given by kings and princes to the church and to the patriarchs; and about the monastery's boundaries, [information] which we found written on parchment and stamped with the royal signet ring.***

The king gave to the blessed church the great *awan* of Karchawan in Meghradzor in the district of Arewik' which he himself had purchased. He also purchased Harzhik' from the lords of Siwnik' and gave that, free of all types of taxes. He also gave Xorasankibak in Geghak'uni, in Sod district and Gotoghvank' in Gar'noydzor. Similarly, Ashot, the senior prince of Siwnik', gave Ts'o'ghun village in Haband district and Bnunik' in Siwnik's Tsg huk' district and Ts'ura with its fortress and fields, the Ts'ura river and monastery, Tandzatap' and Geghdzadzor. The Baghats'is gave Tashu which Ashot had swapped for another village. They also gave the village of Eghegik' in the district of Baghk. The Sup'aneans gave Arit village which borders Harzhik' and Tamalekk'. Later they gave as a gift the village of Ktkoyt' in Geghakunik', free of all taxes. The great and devout first lady (*tikin*, "queen") of Siwnik' gave Tsatsard and K'aratnik'. All these [properties and conditions] were written in a deed before a great assembly and the *kat'oghikos* along with frightful anathemas [g274] and terrible prohibitions [against alienation]. They sealed the document with the king's royal signet ring [having the impression] of a wild boar, and the *kat'oghikos* and princes also signed. Then it was handed over to Siwnik's bishop, Lord Yovhanne's.

We actually saw this deed signed by the donors, but it was old and worn at the edges and so we could only read some of it. Because of its length and considering that it might be boring to the audience, we have not included it in our book. However, as for the boundaries mentioned, we shall record them here. There was a pious woman named Hamaspruhi, the daughter of Prince Babge'n who first gave a large vineyard, located by the Halis River and then [gave] the village named Halis with all its boundaries. And she wrote a deed confirming this with great oaths so that no one would dare to overturn it. Now despite all these donations which were implemented [there were some places they could not acquire]. The inhabitants of Dzur fortress could not be removed from the place for they were lords of an ancient patrimony, [as well as being] barbaric and loathsome folk. Similarly, they were unable to acquire Tamale'k, which was near the monastery—opposite it—since [the owners] were of the same sort. There was also a den of thieves named Berd ("Fortress") facing the monastery on the far side of the great river beside the rock called Ar'aweladasht in Inner Usak. They were unable to get rid of them and the monastery was subjected to no small danger as a result [g275]. Subsequently, however, the patriarchs were also able to acquire this. But then, because of the

weakening of the patriarchate and the devastation of the House, these spiritual legacies came undone. However, when the conflict was settled, one by one they were again renewed.

---

[122]

43.

*[Deed] describing the borders of Tat'ev.*

During the reign of our King Smbat, who was strengthened by God and [during] the time of our *Kat'oghikos* Lord Yovhann'e's, who was robed by God and of our spiritual lord bishop of Siwnik' [also named] Yovhann'e's, who was honored by God [this deed was drawn up]. We, the lowly servants of God, the princes of Siwnik' descended from Hayk, [namely,] Lord Ashot, son of P'ilipp'e', and my sons Smbat, Sahak, and Babge'n, and Lord Grigor Sup'an and his brothers Sahak and Vasak, and Lord Dzagik and his son Jevanshe'r and other *azats* and relatives in the presence of our God-protected king and blessed *kat'oghikos* and the patriarch and princes of the Aghuans, and Lords Gagik and Gurg'en, princes of Vaspurakan, and other bishops, priests, *azats*, and [g276] *tanute'rs*, have compiled this deed, making an authentic and unchangeable document about the borders of the great, blessed, Apostolic see of Siwnik', the monastic complex of Tat'ev. On this day when we have gathered for the consecration of this blessed church, we have liberally enhanced this house with gifts both those [gifts] we give today and those which our ancestors gave in olden times, in the presence of the princes of Siwnik'.

We have read the old deed written by our fathers and grandfathers. We have familiarized ourselves with the inheritance of the Holy Cross and the spiritual lords in our principality and the local borders. We have reconfirmed and enlarged them. Carrying the God-given Holy Cross before us, we have gone on foot with all the assembled and have designated the contours of the [monastery's] borders as follows: On the west, starting with the great promontory overlooking Gaghboyl where the waterfall is, and extending as far as the inner road which is the boundary of Loradzor. On the north, from the natural boundary of the highland, descending down to the river opposite Xot, along the river as far as Xotanan, then across the river, by the small valley that emerges from the ditch of Awazik, with the small hill at Xoghats' with Bats'ahor's same narrow road, not deep, through the waterless valley and descending down; Deghnadzor as far as the bridge; from the bridge K'aradzor with K'aradzor's natural boundary as far as the mountain [g277], and the natural road which goes from the mountain and comes to Harsnavaz, through the small valley of Harsnavaz along by the road which passes close to the side of the church, by the great valley which is intersected with rocks, extending to the sole rock cliff located on the other side of that valley, cutting through the great plain reaching the long intersection with the waterfall to the great ditch and continuing to the road from Baghk' valley—from there to the same Gazboyl mountain.

[123] Behold, these are the boundaries which we walked with our own feet, saw with our own eyes and designated with our own hands to be the boundaries of the blessed monastery of Tat'ev, [lands] to be free from deprivation or alienation. We wrote this and sealed it with our own signet rings and even with the rings of our king and our *kat'oghikos*, [to be the borders] from now to eternity. Let no one dare to challenge this, not the Baghats'is [people of Baghk'], or the Orotnets'is or the Vaghandats'is, or the Shne'rats'is or the Norets'is. Should someone come forth to contest this—either one of our own people or a foreigner, a noble (*azat*) or a worker (*dzer'naworats'*) from the *xostaks* or *tanute'rs*—let such a one be rejected by the Holy Trinity, and anathematized by the three holy councils. Let him be judged with Judas and the crucifiers and evil-doers. Should supremacy pass to the Tachiks and they dare try to ravish it, let them be rejected by their faith and religion, rejected by their prophet [g278], by Allah, the angels, their spiritual fathers, and disrespected by

their descendants. May they be *halal haram* and may this curse be on them for a thousand years. May their lands not have rain and not bear vegetation.

I, Yovhanne's, *kat'oghikos* of the Armenians by the grace of God, am a witness to this document which is unchangeable and not to be overturned, issued by the great princes of Siwnik'. I have stamped it with my customary signet ring.

I, Smbat Bagratuni, king of the Armenians, have confirmed this document and placed my royal seal at the bottom.

I, Gagik, lord of Vaspurakan and of the Artsrunik', son of Grigor-Derenik, certify these donations and boundaries [made to] the [ecclesiastical] throne of Siwnik'.

I, the lowly servant of God, Lord Sime'on, archbishop of the Aghuans, certify this deed and have stamped it with my ring.

I Grigor Sup'an, prince of Siwnik', am a witness to this deed which we have drawn up.

We, Grigor and Esayi and Atrnerseh, princes of the Aghuans, are witnesses to this deed.

We, Dzagik and Hrahat Siwnik', are witnesses to this deed.

We, Sahak, lord of Gardman, and Ashot and Vasak Gnt'uni, are witnesses to this.

I, Yovhanne's, bishop of Siwnik', have confirmed this document with my hand and stamped it with my ring [g279]. May God grace the Holy Cross and the Holy Church and divinely appointed patriarchs who occupy this throne. Done in the year 355 of the Armenian Era (A.D. 906).

---

[124]

#### 44.

#### ***Concerning the destruction by earthquake of Xotakerats' [Vegetarians'] monastery, called Karkop' and its rebuilding by Lady Shushan and Lord Yovhanne's.***

From very long ago this [place] was inhabited by vegetarians and folk dressed in sackcloth. [It was located] in the depths of Vayots' Dzor, within the borders of Hrasek fortress, close to the village of Arastamux, which looks over the plain of Sharur like a watchpost. There was a vast multitude of them, [hermits] who had distanced themselves from [fine] clothing and physical food, spread out among rocky places and ravines and occupying themselves with constant prayer. They would assemble together on Sundays to participate in the divine sacrifice [communion] where they enjoyed only bread and wine. On other days, some lived in caves, others in narrow cells, some out in the open, silent and not speaking a word, sustaining life with only seeds and vegetables. Some of them built a chapel in a narrow valley close to [g280] a delicious source [of water]. This spot is now named Uroy k'ar [Ur'oy Rock] and their graves are there, providing very great healings. Others built an altar in another broad valley and dwelled there. That place was called the old monastery. Yet others were scattered here and there, having as their center the church near Arastamux village. It was here, in an appropriate spot, where they erected an astonishing and divinely awe-inspiring holy symbol which folk styled the Vegetarians' Cross. After the destruction of our land, those clerics dispersed. The place remained ruined and uninhabited until the time of Lord Ashot, prince of Siwnik'. The great bishop of Siwnik', Lord Yovhanne's, subsequently informed him of the situation and [Ashot] ordered that the church and monastery be

rebuilt, that clerics be assembled there, and that the village of Arastamux be given as a legacy to the church. And it was done.

[125] Afterwards the pious and majestic Prince Ashot died. The church and all the monastery's buildings collapsed from a severe earthquake. The bishop again informed the venerable Lady Shushan about these developments. She, being exceedingly pious and devout, asked the bishop to quickly undertake the rebuilding of the church and area more magnificently than before "so that," she said, "the memory of my lord, Ashot, will not be forgotten." The delighted [g281] bishop, Lord Yovhanne's, undertook this without delay or hindrance. They invited to the consecration ceremony the great *kat'oghikos* of the Armenians [also named] Lord Yovhanne's. They had adorned the monastery more brilliantly than before and wrote a memorial inscription on the church of Ashot and Shushan, which had this text:

"The monastery of Xotakerats' [the Vegetarians] had existed from long ago. The residence of the clerics of the monastery and its place of expiation had long been in ruins. My lord, the venerable Ashot, labored to restore the blessed church and along with it all the buildings of the church orders. Now when my lord Ashot had been gathered to his fathers, our sons designated the village of Artamux with its boundaries for the sustenance of the fathers of the blessed monastery. This was to be a memorial for the souls of the venerable Prince Ashot and for me, Shushan, first lady of Siwnik' and for the longevity of our sons. Then there occurred an earthquake which demolished the churches. I, sharing [the intentions] of my lord, Ashot, and wishing to renew his memory after he had passed to Christ, again built the blessed church along with the clerics' buildings in the name of the holy perpetual Virgin Mary, Mother of God, for salvation of [the soul of] my venerable lord [g282] Ashot, prince of Siwnik', for my sinful soul, for the longevity and prosperity of my son, Smbat, and others. I confirmed this by the hand of the chief of the monastery and with the consent of my sons that from now until the end of time the aforementioned village of Arastamux with all its borders be for the enjoyment of the Xotakerats' monastery.

I have confirmed, with an irrevocable resolution made here, in this refuge for clerics, that these five churches which I built, one of which is dedicated to the blessed Mother of God, shall celebrate for my lord, Ashot, and for myself yearly three quarantines for our sinful souls so that we perhaps may find mercy at the awesome tribunal of Christ. Four churches will be for the longevity and salvation of the souls of our sons and for the needs of the convent. Let no one dare oppose or obstruct this arrangement. Otherwise, let him share the lot of the traitor Judas and be accountable for my sins on the day of Christ's awful tribunal.

We are witnesses to this document and deed: Lord Yovhanne's, *kat'oghikos* of the Armenians, with our bishops and clerics, and Lord Yovhanne's, bishop of Siwnik'. This memorial was written in the year 359 [g283] of the Armenian Era [A.D. 910] by the will of Almighty God Who is blessed forever. Amen."

---

[126]

## 45.

### ***The construction of Yovhannu monastery [Yovhannavank'] by Dzagik's son, Vahan.***

As we mentioned earlier, there was a certain Vahan, son of Prince Dzagik, brother of Jevanshe'r, who had become possessed by a *dev*. He had become a cleric and wanted to build a monastery and establish clerical orders in it for perpetual worship. After practising many severe austerities, he came to the foot of a lofty mountain on which was the impregnable fortress of Baghaberd, facing Achanan. He came upon a level and

very suitable spot [for a monastery] and first prayed to the Lord to succor the work of his hands. Then he invited his brethren to engage in this work. He commenced constructing the church, and erected a House to the glory of God. It had a beautiful design, a dome, and three altars built of solid blocks of dressed stone. Then he built a residence for the clerics.

He adorned this with magnificent, regal appointments and assembled more than 100 brothers of blessed faith there, at this church which was in the name of the blessed Illuminator, Saint Gregory. They designated as a share of the legacy [g284] of the church, [these properties]: the valley with its river and, on both sides, fields and the monastery's vineyards, toward the mountain side, up to the plateau where herds of animals graze; toward the city side, as far as the outer wall which starts at the mountain; on the Tandzap'arax side, the large valley which begins at the mountain and descends to the river, as well as the villages opposite the monastery: Ach'aghun, the Ach'aghu river, Aravayr, Shekk', as well as many other gifts and legacies, all confirmed by a deed with unbreakable provisions. Vahan named the monastery Vahanuvank' after his own name. Thereafter on a daily basis it became wealthy, like a populous city. As for Vahan himself, after a life of great asceticism and labors, he died and was buried by the door of the blessed church. This blessed congregation was built in the year 360 of the Armenian Era [A.D. 911] during the kingship of Smbat Bagratuni, in the principate of Siwnik' of the senior crown prince Smbat, son of Ashot, during the principate in Baghk' of Jevanshe'r, and in the episcopate of Siwnik' of Lord Yovhanne's.

However, subsequently, Jevanshe'r's son, Vahan, who was his [the monastery builder Vahan's] brother's son, whom he had raised and nourished from childhood and had been schooled in divine knowledge in that same House, became a priest and became abbot of the blessed [g285] congregation. [Vahan] also increased construction and adorned the monastery in a dignified manner, building from huge blocks the great chapel at the door of the church. Buried there are many kings and queens of the Aghuans and of Baghk' and many glorious princes of our Sisakan land. He also constructed a beautifully designed portico for the church using enormous hewn stones of 30 cubits height. He built an arch at the door of the monastery and on it two altars in the name of blessed apostles Peter and Paul. He built a large dining hall from rubble stone cemented with lime, and he led water to its door with pipes. Thus did he beautify the place with many constructions. Subsequently, he himself was called to [head] the episcopacy of Siwnik' after Lord Yakob. And then, with the greatest glory, he went on to the *kat'oghikosate* of the Armenians after Lord Anania of Mokk' [A.D. 946-968]. Occupying the *kat'oghikosate* for 5 years he died in the district of Tosp in the land of Vaspurakan at Dzoroyvank' which is near Berkri. He is buried at the door of the church. Long after, in the days of Grigor, king of Baghk', and Queen Shahanduxt, and Katay, and King Senek'erim, many more beautiful buildings were added to Vahan's monastery: enormous vaults [g286] were built supporting churches as well as palaces adorned with many tall columns, for the residence of princes and for their diversion. Here, too, came the venerable *kat'oghikos* of the Aghuans, Lord Step'annos where he resided for some days. He died there and was buried in that same holy place.

---

[127]

## 46.

### ***Concerning the priest, Lord Ge'org, who was the son of the prince of Siwnik'.***

In the days of P'ilippe's son, Lord Vasak, the prince of Siwnik', a child named Ge'org was born into the line of Sisak. He was very handsome and of good stature, and when he matured he took a wife. Fearing God, he was troubled by the words of the Gospel, which say: "If a man will not abandon his father and mother, his wife and child, and take up the Cross and follow me, he is not worthy of me." [Ge'org] did not rest or have a liking for sensual pleasure or vanity, and entered matrimony in celibacy and holiness. One day he suddenly

vanished from his palace and family, and secretly went to a monastery where he changed [g287] his clothes for skins and a hairshirt, remaining there unknown in his troubled fervor. Meanwhile, a cry of alarm arose from his mother, the very pious woman Hamamuhi, and his wife, brothers, and servants, and they went about searching for Ge'org, but they did not find him.

After a short while they found the place [that Ge'org had gone to]. They went there and forcibly returned him to his palace. They ripped off his hairshirt and goat skin and dressed him in his patrimonial royal silken garments. Now although they kept him forcibly, he did not mingle with them. Rather, like someone intoxicated and possessed with the love of Christ, he was detached and silent, occupying himself by always praying and reading. Then, one day, he vanished again. Donning a coarse hairshirt and torn clothing, he went to Erits'uvank' [Erits'u monastery], a place famous for its sanctity, to the blessed God-clothed ascetic, the great *economos* priest, T'e'odorus. [T'e'odorus] received him with the greatest joy. Now when [Ge'org's] mother and wife learned of this, they took their relative, the prince of Siwnik', and went to Erits'uvank'. Despite numerous and diverse entreaties, they were unable to alter his resolve. And when they realized that his love for Christ was unwavering, they let him have his way, and they departed. [Ge'org], after practising many austerities and adhering to the strictest rules, chose [g288] to become a priest. Now there flourished as ascetics in that period the great bishop of Siwnik', Lord Sagho'mo'n, and the venerable Mashtots' of Sevan. Since Ge'org aroused the jealousy of some people, *vardapets* and laity who spoke roughly about him, T'e'odoros took him to Lord Sagho'mo'n. [The latter] received him with great affection and comforted him with his advice. [Lord Sagho'mo'n] ordered him to distance himself from there, and to go to Mashtots', from whom he would study and learn to practise all sorts of virtues. [Ge'org] did this.

[128] He set off with T'e'odoros and went to Sevan where he remained for many days [with Mashtots']. Thus, under his direction, he studied and was advised about all good works. Then [Ge'org] returned to his own place where he found that the bishop had died and had been succeeded by Lord Yovhannes'. [Ge'org] went to greet him, and received from him additional encouragement and comforting words. He lived in Erits'uvank' where he practised great austerities along with T'e'odoros. Then, after some time, he again went to Mashtots' at Sevan, by the order of Lord Yovhannes'. [Ge'org] earnestly entreated him about the priesthood. [Mashtots'] sent him to the *kat'oghikos* of the Armenians, Ge'org [Gevorg II, Gar'nets'i, 877-897] with a written request which acquainted him with all his [g289] circumstances, declaring himself as [Ge'org's] adoptive father and standing as surety for him. When the *kat'oghikos* saw Ge'org and read the letter, he received him with great honor and ordered that he be ordained into the priesthood. Then they sent him back to his place, and many folk were delighted. Mashtots', who had recommended him, never ceased to inspire him through letters and to caution him with spiritual advice. Now during the *kat'oghikosate* of Mashtots', Ge'org was constantly with him until his death. After Mashtots' death, [Ge'org] came and brought the venerable [Mashtots'] cope, hood-shaped diadem, and tunic as symbols for the people of Siwnik'. [Ge'org] himself dwelled in Erits'uvank' with T'e'odoros, leading an angelic life. When he died there, his blessed body was placed near that of the thrice-blessed father Erits'ak, in the same sanctuary. Through their intercession may Christ have mercy on this House and this [ecclesiastical] throne, and on the flock of the faithful.

---

[129]

## 47.

### ***Regarding the building of Noravank' in the district of Bghe'n.***

The venerable Father Ge'org had a young relative from the same clan of Sisak named Step'annos [g290], whom they had dedicated to God after he had been weaned. For his education they placed him at the feet of elderly men inspired by God, and, taking such nourishment, he became adorned with all perfection, inside

and out, both in theory and practise. Then he was called to the priesthood by Lord Yovhanne's, bishop of Siwnik'. Feeling the desire to accomplish some pious work, [Step'annos] wished to build a church, and establish in it a home for the clerics and the ranks of servitors, so that he would ascend higher, from strength to strength, and might come to God and the angels in Zion. [Step'annos] then went to an area behind Kataroyvank' where he found a very beautiful and charming place, a plateau situated between two valleys. He began to build a church there with the aid of Prince Hrahat. He completed it along with porticos and halls for the church and a dwelling place for clerics.

Then he invited to the consecration Lord Yakob, bishop of Siwnik', and they allotted to the church as a legacy, property surrounding it, and designated for it a community of brethren. They also built a leprosarium opposite the monastery where many patients gathered and were cared for. And thus, in 385 of the Armenian Era [A.D. 936] it was completed, with the monastery abundantly supplied with utensils and regulations. The venerable [g291] Step'annos himself, who was unparalleled among men, lived an angelic life for many years, practising virtue, bearing more than a body can, mortifying his flesh and living by the [Holy] Spirit, until he passed from this world into the ranks of the angels. This citizen of the Heavenly City passed to his mayor of that City, Christ, on Wednesday the 17th of [the month of] Navasard, during the days of holy Pentecost, in the year 419 of the Armenian Era [A.D. 970]. He was buried close to the church. [Step'annos] was succeeded in the leadership of the convent of Noravank' by Father Hrahat and, after him, by K'ristap'or, son of [Step'annos'] own brother, a student of this blessed father, who resembled his *vardapet* in everything.

Soon afterwards, a church was built with a lovely design by Father Ge'org and Yovhanne's the priest. Its entrance had astonishing arches with columns made by skilled craftsmen using enormous boulders.

[130]

---

## 48.

### *About the destruction of Ts'uraberd and anathemas against its rebuilding.*

In the period of Smbat, son of Ashot, the senior prince of Siwnik', and during the episcopacy [g292] of Lord Yovhanne's, builder of the blessed church, the great congregation of Tat'ev was subjected to frequent and great tribulations from the inhabitants of Ts'uraberd [Ts'ura fortress]. [These people were] godless, immoral bandits. One day [the bandits] came at an unexpected hour of the night and commenced looting the church, the workshops, and the clerics' residence. They were also hunting for the bishop, in order to kill him. However, they did not find him. But they put to the sword some elderly folk, while others fled. What [the bandits] found they took with them back to their fortress [of Ts'uraberd]. They also took a silver urn containing chrism and dumped it out on a rock. Now the next morning the bishop came and surveyed all the damage done. He raised the Holy Cross and other sacred objects and they cursed the fortress and its inhabitants with frightful curses. Immediately, the earth shook and the rock [promontory which the fortress sat on] split in two, all the buildings collapsed, and many of the inhabitants were lost. However, the bishop did not dare to continue living there. Taking the Cross and all the servitors, he arose and went to a foreign land.

When the illustrious Prince Smbat learned about this, he and other *azats* arose and pursued the bishop and the Holy Cross. After many entreaties, [Smbat] brought him to his own place, to the great patriarchate at Tat'ev. Then they began to harass [g293] the accursed residents of Ts'ura Rock: some were subjected to great punishment, others died. Generally, [Smbat] destroyed them and/or got them to quit the land. [Smbat] gave their place with its borders as hereditary property to the church, entrusting it to Lord Yovhanne's. He ordered

that a deed be drawn up containing terrible curses, so that no one would dare to rebuild [the fortress]. This was sealed and placed [in a depository] of the holy church. [The deed] was so written, with this content:

**[131]** "I, Yovhanne's, through the grace of God bishop of Siwnik', wrote this deed with my own hand at the command of Smbat, prince of Siwnik'. For great danger had befallen us from the wicked, godless brigands who inhabited the rock called Ts'uraberd. One night, unexpectedly, they came against our community of brethren, robbing all the buildings and killing some of the elderly. When we learned about this disaster, we took the Holy Cross and left for another land, because of the persecution, and the clerics dispersed. However, the God-protected Lord Smbat, when informed, came and turned us back. With his brave heart and devout faith, [Smbat] roared like a lion and went against the malefactors. He dispersed all of them until, in his great wisdom, he was satisfied that the Rock would be useless [g294] and unprofitable to anyone for harassing either the people of Baghk' or anyone else or the blessed church, which he and his forefathers had adorned and embellished with great labor and inestimable riches until it gleamed with beauty. [Smbat] thus freed [the land] from them and brought ease to the Holy Cross, the church, and to us, bringing about peace from those bitter disturbances. He then put that place into our hands. May Lord God requite him for this with a long and peaceful reign during his lifetime to enjoy [life] with his children and clan. And after his death [may God grant him] eternal life and the Kingdom, making him worthy of [being ranked with] the blessed kings.

By the command of Smbat, prince of Siwnik', I wrote this testament with my own hands and stamped it with my customary signet ring, and placed it in the church. [It is in effect] in perpetuity, so that in later times no one will dare to commit such crimes. Anyone who opposes our order and takes Ts'ur from the blessed church and/or attempts to regard that false Rock as a fortress and attempts to rebuild it and again [tries to] harass the blessed church, let that person be anathematized by Almighty God, all the saints, and by us. May he not obtain mercy. Rather, may [g295] he be exposed to the most painful curses, may his sons perish, and may the name of his clan be wiped out, may his own name be deleted from the *Book of Life* and may he share with Satan the unquenchable fire [of Hell]. As for the senior [prince] who happens to rule [in later times], if he remains true to the conditions [set forth in this deed], as has the pious Prince Smbat, may [that future ruler] inherit his blessing and reward. However, [should such a ruler] forget or ignore [these terms], may he not enjoy what he has and may he be subject to all the curses in this document."

This [writing] occurred in 364 of the Armenian Era [A.D. 915].

Now after a long while, when the patriarchate had been disturbed and the church's legacies had been dispersed, some people took this place [Ts'uraberd] and again rebuilt it. And they initiated very great persecutions against the church, in the days of the reign of Vasak and Sewada and their mother, Shahanduxt. Once again they destroyed the monastery. Bishop Lord Yakob had gone to Baghk' and was returning when these dogs—who were secretly watching the road he was travelling on through the depths of Ts'ur—sprang out and killed the bishop. He was buried there in memory of this wicked deed. To this day, at this site there is healing for leprosy, small pox, and other diseases. [Bishop Yakob] was succeeded by Lord Grigor [g296]. The latter, when asked about this place by King Vasak, showed him the earlier document with its curses, which Lord Yovhanne's had written in his own handwriting. [King Vasak] then gave an order that the place be pulled apart to the foundation, and the site of the fortress be completely destroyed. And so it was obliterated. Then a second deed was written with this content:

**[132]** "By the grace of God it was the will of the devout and pious King Vasak, and Sewada, prince of princes, and their mother, Shahanduxt, through the fervor of their faith and fear of God, that they reconfirm the aforementioned deed written by the venerable Lord Yovhanne's, builder of this blessed

church, containing severe anathemas for now and eternity, regarding reconstruction of Ts'ura Rock. Carelessly and impiously [some people] began to rebuild the fortress for temporal advantages. However, they failed in this because their impiety caused them to be killed, reduced, and lost. In our times [the aforementioned rulers] ordered that it be ruined and razed to the ground. May whoever dares to rebuild it be cursed by the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. May [that person's] sons become beggars, and may they be thrown out of their habitation and may they not live out [the measure of] their lives. Now should seniority pass to a Tachik and should he try to ravish Ts'ura or rebuild the fortress, may that [malefactor] be cursed by God and [g297] condemned by his [prophet] Muhammad, may his *halal* become *haram*, and may he be disgraced and have his face blackened by his Koran. I, Lord Grigor, wrote this testament with my own hand, and stamped it with my customary signet ring, by the will of God."

---

## 49.

### ***The death of Lord Yovhanne's and the succession of Lord Yakob and the addition to the church's legacy in his day.***

After effecting many improvements and doing great and noteworthy deeds, the venerable patriarch, the great Lord Yovhanne's, who was clad in God, died. He was placed in a grave by the blessed church in 367 of the Armenian Era [A.D. 918]. However, we have not recorded many things he did to enrich the legacy of the blessed convent. [For one thing, these were] written in old letters which we were unable to decipher accurately. For another, we thought that this [material] would be tedious to the audience. After [Lord Yovhanne's'] passing, Smbat, the senior prince of Siwnik', requested a bishop and leader from the great and powerful *kat'oghikos* of the Armenians, Lord Yovhanne's. Now it so happened that there was in the House of the *kat'oghikos* a chamberlain and functionary of the *kat'oghikos*, the senior of all the clerics named Yakob [g298], who was from Dvin and was the brother's son of the *kat'oghikos* Lord Yovhanne's. [Yakob] was a tall, handsome, intelligent, learned, mild and amiable man, full of all virtues. [The *kat'oghikos*] considered him suitable for that great Apostolic throne. With the approval of many and in the presence of many people, [the *kat'oghikos*] ordained Yakob and sent him there as bishop of Siwnik'. He came and embellished the blessed church with many superb properties, making it richer than ever. With the sweetest teachings he instructed those in his diocese and cared for his flock.

[133] Somehow, secretly fortified by the Word of God, he purchased the water of Dzage'dzor River, called Vararak, from Lord P'ilippe', son of Prince Vasak of Siwnik'. [He paid] 12,000 *drams* and a radiant gem whose price and quality were not generally known. With great labor and enormous expense, he led the water from Mount Dzage'dzor to Ts'ak'ut, which was opposite the monastery on the other side of the river. In that rocky place which had been covered with brambles, he planted grape vines of the best sort and roses, many vineyards, and orchards of diverse fruits such as olives, figs, and pomegranates. He created a marvellous paradise full of all sorts of fruit-bearers [g299] and covered a large expanse with dense trees and the vines of delicious grapes for the pleasure of the brotherhood and for the needs of all the poor and needy. Then, seeing a charming hill in the midst of the orchard, he levelled its summit and surrounded it with a wall. Entering here, one could see a splendid panorama of all the vineyards. Then he built [on the hill] a domed chapel of astonishing design. He had its walls and ceiling decorated with paintings of various colors, representing all the figures of the Incarnation, the Apostles, and the Patriarchs. The church was surrounded by halls and porticoes. Then he wrote the following commemorative inscription:

"I, Yakob, by the grace of God bishop of Siwnik', purchased the Vararak water from the God-kept Lord P'ilippe', lord of Siwnik' for 12,000 *drams* and a rare gem. With great expense and very great labor, with assistance from On High, I brought water from Mount Dzage'dzor to irrigate this rose

garden and I planted choice grape vines, beautiful vineyards, and gardens full of flowers and fruits for the enjoyment of the blessed patriarchs established on this holy throne, for the blessed assembly [of brethren] and for all believers in Christ. May God [g300] grant enjoyment of it to all. Now I beseech you all to remember my wretched soul in your holy prayers. Regarding the water, there is no issue [about its use], not from the people of Norik, Xotan, Shnhe'rik, or Halik, nor from any individual. It may not be diverted into any field or used to irrigate gardens. It may only be used, with a basin, to provide thirsty folk and animals with a drink of water. Now, should anyone dare to divert this water, may that person be cursed by God, the Holy Cross, the 318 patriarchs who assembled in Nicaea, all the saints, and by us. And may [the violator of the provisions of this deed] share the lot of apostates and witches on Christ's dreaded Judgement Day. May [the violator] be tormented together with Satan and his angels in the unquenchable fire, in a place where the flames are never extinguished, and the worm never dies. This deed was written in 381 of the Armenian Era [A.D. 932] by my hand and stamped with my customary signet ring, by the will of God."

**[134]** In addition to this document, written in his own handwriting on parchment [by Lord Yakob], we found another, the document of the sale itself, written by the hand of the very Prince P'ilippe', son of Vasak, who was called Ishxanik, son of the great P'ilippe'. It has this content:

"By the will of God, I, P'ilippe', son of Lord Vasak, lord of Siwnik' willingly sold the water of Vararak [g301] to [the church of] Saint Gregory. My grandfather, Lord P'ilippe', had built this at the holy episcopacy of Tat'ev. Yakob, bishop of Siwnik' purchased it for 12,000 *drams* and one very valuable gem. He paid for it in full. I received the treasure and the one gem from Yakob, bishop of Siwnik', and I and my sons and other relatives renounce [ownership of] that water hereafter, until eternity. The people of Norik, Xotan, Shnhe'r, and Halik have no claims whatever, great or small, [on the water] to divert it to their fields and meadows. People and animals may only drink from it, using a basin. Should I or my children deviate from these provisions, or think to divert the water to irrigate fields and meadows or for any other purpose, may we be anathematized by God, the holy sign [of the Cross], and also eternally inherit the curses mentioned above by Lord Yakob. May God favor this blessed monastery and its patriarchs who are clad in God."

At great, inestimable expense, Yakob had artists and portrait painters brought from the distant land of the Franks to illuminate the vault of this House of God to completely cover it from top to bottom [with painting]. He had them paint an image of the Savior which astonished viewers [g302]. This was directly opposite the holy altar. Above [the altar] was painted the vault of the firmament. Below this, close to the altar, were painted realistic images of the prophets, the apostles, and patriarchs. The entire place was thus adorned, such that it dazzled the eyes of beholders, since it did not seem as though these figures had been painted with paint of differing hues, but rather that they were actually alive. People seeing it were dumbstruck.

This occurred in 379 of the Armenian Era [A.D. 930]. [Yakob] invited the *kat'oghikos* of the Armenians, many bishops, and princes to participate in the consecration service and blessing of the images, in a grand solemn assembly. This was in no way less solemn than the previous blessing of the temple. Now it happened that the den of thieves we mentioned earlier, opposite the monastery on the shoulder of the place called Aweladasht, had again become filled with bandits. They committed numerous crimes and made it very difficult for the brethren and the surrounding areas. Then the bishop beseeched the princes of Siwnik' and, with their order, drove these people out, wrecked and sacked their place of refuge, and demolished it to its foundations. Then the area with its borders became the property of the church. With great and fearsome oaths [g303] [the bishop] forbade anyone from daring to rebuild [the place] or residing there.

***Construction of a church and monastery in the district of Vayots' Dzor by Lord Yakob and Prince Smbat. Regarding the blessed Mamas.***

In 378 of the Armenian Era [A.D. 929], during the reign as king of the Armenians of Ablabas son of King Smbat and in the lordship of Siwnik' of Smbat and his brother and sons, it came about that the venerable [Yakob], bishop of Siwnik', had occasion to visit a place in the valley of Eghegik' above the village of Ostin. [Yakob] was enraptured by the stunning beauty of the place, its isolation and security. Under the influence of Divine Providence, [Yakob] began to build there, by order of Prince Smbat, his wife, Sop'i, and his brother, Sahak. There he erected a House of God from cut stones and adorned it with beautiful painting of various hues. Then [Bishop Yakob] invited Smbat and Sahak to the consecration of this temple. [Smbat and Sahak] assigned to it as a legacy all the mountainside extending down to the river with its many gardens and fields. And they established a home for clerics there, to the glory of God [g304].

In 385 of the Armenian era [A.D. 936] the God-empowered Prince Smbat arose one day and left his court which was in the town of Eghegik'. He was going to divert himself by hunting. He chanced upon some hermits who were vegetarians, clad in God, dwelling hidden in the clefts of rocks, like statues. This [place], called K'are'vank', was in the valley over Eghegik', which overlooked the course of the river. Astonished by their reduced and humble condition, [Smbat] asked them about their lives. They modestly replied: "We were persecuted and fled from the world to escape from its storms, if possible." Subsequently, the prince made enquiries of his bishop, Lord Yakob, and ordered him to get to work and quickly construct a church in a suitable spot, so that the blessed hermits might live there.

[The bishop] went to the blessed fathers and asked what they wanted. They showed him a level site at the foot of a rock which rose straight up, and it was here that he began to construct a stone church with a dome, dedicated to Saint Gregory. [Bishop Yakob] brought Ahermon, the most senior of the elders, his disciple Azaria, and other brothers, and settled them there. The prince came and [they] blessed [g305] the church. The pious Lady Sop'ia purchased the village of Hawu and its borders, which was opposite the monastery, and she gave it as inheritance to the church along with other vineyards and gardens in Eghegik'. She also adorned [the church] with many utensils and enriched it with all kinds of useful things. With very great anathemas she confirmed Hawu village [as the church's property] so that no one would try to separate it from the church. As a memorial to themselves [they stipulated] that the feast of Saint Gregory be celebrated and that forty masses be celebrated on the feast of Vardavar' [Transfiguration]. They named the place Ahermon's monastery after the old man.

**[136]** After some years, the venerable and pious Lady Sop'ia went to the hermits living at a place called Gnde'vank', situated in the midst of numerous ravines. [She went there] to accomplish a vow. Here were located a multitude of relics of martyred saints from ancient times. No one knew who [the martyrs] were or where they had come from, but they worked some very remarkable healings. The lady saw this and was very pleased with the place. She wanted to build a church and house the ranks of the clerics there. That night, the martyrs appeared to her and asked her to do as she had planned. Upon waking, the lady immediately had skilled masons brought there and began constructing [the church]. Father Sargis was appointed abbot of the monastery. Eghia the priest [g306], who was also an artist, was his assistant and [Lady Sop'ia] with great solicitousness entrusted completion [of the work] to Lord Yakob. Father Sup'an, called Gnduni, was there too, noteworthy for his great asceticism. Thus a House of God was built, its ceiling and walls adorned with paintings. They held the consecration service in the presence of a great solemn assembly and blessed [the church] naming it after the Holy Martyrs. And they established there a group of servitors and many clerics.

Similarly, in every suitable place in that valley they built retreats and installed there those hermits and vegetarians who glorified God more than the fathers of Sinai. The venerable Lady [Sop'ia] named the monastery Gndevank'. She built a village above the monastery on a rock promontory and gave it as an inheritance to the church, free from all kinds of taxes. She made the same arrangement for Atch'ar village, which was located on the other side [of the monastery]. With great anathemas she prevented [anyone] in future times from hindering these [gifts and provisions]. This occurred in 385 of the Armenian Era [A.D. 936]. Moreover, up and down the valley as far as Golosht Rock she had densely planted with fruit-bearing trees and marvellous, beautiful vineyards yielding delicious produce. This abundance was for the enjoyment of the holy brethren and [g307] all those in need. She wrote a short memorial inscription with the following content:

**[137]** "I, Lady Sop'ia, wife of the God-preserved Lord Smbat of Siwnik', and daughter of Grigor Derenek, built this church in memory of my soul and for the longevity of the Prince of Princes Smbat and our children. I adorned [the church] with costly vessels and gave two villages to it as a legacy. Let no one dare to obstruct or alienate them from the holy church, under pain of unbreakable curses from God and from the congregation of saints. [Formerly], Vayots' Dzor was a ring without a stone. I made this [church] and placed a jewel on [that ring]."

Some years later, in 448 of the Armenian Era [A.D. 999], Father K'ristap'or built a portico for the church. There are also many memorials there of the venerable Father Gurge'n. However, after many years, during the *kat'oghikosate* of the Armenians of Lord Sargis, and during the reign as king of Gagik, son of Ashot and the renewed kingship over Siwnik' and Baghk' of Vasak, another Father Sargis, who was [spiritual] leader of that House, at great expense brought delicious-tasting water from the great mountain overlooking [the monastery], from the sources of the river called Dzknarats. Under the leadership of an invisible angel, with great effort and very great [g308] expense, [Father Sargis] had water brought to the monastery's lands, thereby irrigating them and the entire mountainside. No one has any claim on this, not the people of Prak or of Kech'ut, or anyone from the surrounding villages. This occurred in 457 of the Armenian Era [A.D. 1008] during the episcopate of Lord Yovhanne's.

He himself made an inscription on the church in black [letters] containing great and severe anathemas regarding [usage of] the water, so that no one would dare cut it off or take over any part of it, except for drinking with a basin, for man and beast. He further stipulated that a yearly commemoration be held on the [feast] day of the great general, Saint Sargis, with the performance of eight quarantines, [and that] severe judgement fall upon those who neglect this.

**[138]** Now I shall briefly mention the great and venerable blessed martyr, Saint Mamas, whose relics were brought to this land in an early period and buried in the district of Vayots' Dzor within the borders of the impregnable fortress of Sulem. In the time of the reign of the Arshakuni clan as kings of the Armenians, when our land flourished under rich and powerful leadership, the fervor of divine love of a newly-converted people inspired all kinds of good works [g309]. This was especially [manifest] toward love of the martyrs of God. Everyone with unlimited efforts and expenses was trying, if possible, to find the relics of saints and to bring them to their own district and principality so that, through them and the perpetual intercession of Christ, they might be strengthened against all the attacks of enemies and from all evils which might befall them.

This was also the case with the Sisakan princes when they went to the city of Caesarea with Saint Gregory and again with Saint Nerse's and at other times. They spared neither enormous expense nor immense labors nor, especially, vigils, prayers, and austere fasts to obtain the blessed relics of the venerable and great ascetic Mamas, who had lived in the mountains near Caesarea. The story of his great austerities and the struggle of his martyrdom is provided in his homily on martyrdom, and his praises were proclaimed by Gregory the Theologian, in an elegy on the New Sunday. The great faith and fervor of the princes made them worthy of

such a divine gift. For, thanks to Providence from On High, they obtained a priceless treasure—half of Saint Mamas' relics, from his waist up to his head and including the arms. They left the remainder there in his holy church and [g310] tomb. [The princes] acquired a cart drawn by white mules and they placed the blessed relics in a silver casket which they accompanied with the singing of psalms and blessings. Mounted on Arabian steeds whose pace was so swift that it was as though they flew through the air on wings, they crossed the great distance over long roads and reached the natural borders of their lordship in the district of Mazaz. From there they crossed through Gegham and entered Vayots' Dzor with the intention of carrying the relics to their royal seat in Siwnik'.

**[139]** However, in this regard, the will from On High did not comport with their own will. By the will of the divine Spirit, the legs of the mules froze up and the cart stopped on a level spot in the Sulem valley, called Dezpanart. Here, filled with sorrow, [the princes] assembled the people of the district and by dint of fervent prayers prolonged until morning, they sought to continue travelling. However, hardly had they advanced a short distance, when again the mules halted at an appropriate spot, near the borders of the village called Xarashko'nk'. They refused to advance any farther. And so they called the bishop of Siwnik' who assembled a multitude of abbots and they transferred the relics into a stone coffin. Close to this they built a martyrium made of stone cemented with lime. And they incorporated the surrounding area [g311] into the monastery's lands. Clerics were assigned to dwell there and to serve the saints.

Now in later times, in an era of anarchy, during the tyranny of At'abak Iwane', two brethren named Se't' and Poghos, who were devout hermits and leaders of the monastery, with many prayers and pleadings, removed the casket of the saint, built a small chapel, and deposited it there. The stone lid was removed, and the remains [of Saint Mamas] were openly displayed for all to see. This was in [lacuna] of the Armenian Era. During the transfer [of the relics], they had opened the coffin and removed the right hand. Great healings took place on that day. Now it happened that one of the brethren, who had secretly removed a tooth [of Saint Mamas] was suddenly seized by a *dev*. He foamed at the mouth and shouted out his secret theft and was cured only with great difficulty. They gave the right hand to the monastery of Ayrivank'. We could not learn the names of those [princes] who had previously brought the relics, or the date of the event itself. The relics are here and remain for the glory of this land, for which they intercede. Every day they work great wonders and healings for people in distress, or suffering from illnesses, and demoniacs. Through their intercession may Christ God preserve this land, its churches, and me, so weighed down with sin. Glory to Christ, forever. Amen [g312].

**[End of Volume 1 of 2]**

---

# Step'annos Orbelean's

## *History of the State of Sisakan*

[140]

51.

### *Concerning the legacies given to the blessed church of Tat'ev by means of Bishop Yakob.*

Now it came about as the result of some circumstances that Smbat, the pious prince who was protected by God, the son of Ashot, and the grandson of Vasak, came to the holy see to pray before the Cross. Wishing to leave an immortal remembrance and an imperishable monument for his soul, and for the souls of his family, he offered spiritual gifts to the church, the family's own patrimonial village of Ktkoyk' in the district of Geghark'unik' [g9]. He handed this over to Lord Yakob with an unbreakable deed which had the following content:

"In the name of God, I, Prince Smbat, son of Ashot, grandson of Vasak, the God-preserved lords of Siwnik', chose to give a portion of my patrimony, the village of Ktkoyk' in the district of Gegham, together with all its borders to the bishop of Siwnik', Lord Yakob, to our Holy Cross and to the radiant God-inhabited Holy Church for the sake of our souls. No one else shall have lordship over it, neither we nor our children, nor shall anyone else have authority over this village to alienate it from the Holy Cross or the blessed see. Should anyone come out against this [provision], may he be condemned by God and share the lot of Judas and the crucifiers. May his case not succeed, may his heirs not inherit; rather, may he and his sons dwell in the outer darkness [of Hell]. Now the masters [of this property] are you, Lord Yakob, bishop of Siwnik' and the other patriarchs who succeed you on this blessed throne from now until eternity. We entrust our sinful souls to you and to the Holy Cross. By the will of God, may this remain firm. I, Smbat, wrote this deed with my own hand, signed it with my customary signet ring, and placed on it [g10] the lordly seal of the ring of Lord Yakob in 369 of the Armenian Era [A.D. 920]. I, Lord Yakob, confirmed this deed with my own hand. I am a witness to this spiritual gift of Lord Smbat, son of Ashot, lord of Siwnik', by which he gave his patrimonial village of Ktkoyk' to the Holy Church. Let no one dare to oppose this either now or in the future. Should that happen, may such a person be cursed by God, all the saints, the blessed patriarchs, and by us. And may he receive his [guilty] verdict before Christ's awful tribunal and share the fate of the unbelievers in the unquenchable flames of Gehenna. As for those who are appointed to this see after us: you are obliged to keep alive the memory of Lord Smbat and to seek forgiveness for his sins and, on a yearly basis, to observe one quarantine [forty days' fast] for him. This was written by my hand and stamped with my customary signet ring, by the will of God."

[141] Now some time later, Prince P'ilippe' came to Lord Yakob at the blessed see. This P'ilippe' was the son of Vasak, grandson of the great P'ilippe' who sold the water [rights] to Lord Yakob. Being aware of the vanity of this transitory life, he set up a memorial to himself with quarantines and gifted two villages to [the church of] Saint Grigor, which the great P'ilippe' had built in the district of Haband, namely, Aghuerts and Yubakanxor' [g11]. He himself wrote an unerradicable and immortal memorial in the year 392 of the Armenian Era [A.D. 943] having the following content:

"In the name of God, during the tenure of the God-honored and spiritual Lord Yakob, bishop of Siwnik', I, Lord P'ilippe', son of Vasak who was the son of the God-protected P'ilippe', lord of Siwnik', realizing and knowing that soon all people wilt [and die] like the grass and that all human glory fades like a flower in the field, became fearful about my own salvation. And so, I put my hopes on this God-inhabited congregation. I took the Holy Cross as a memorial for my soul and gave to this blessed church in the full flowering of my faith, from my legitimate patrimony, the village of Yubakanxor' which I purchased from Artawazd, Sakir's son, as well as the other hamlet, Aghuerts, which I purchased from the people of Xotanan, from the sons of Ablashab and from the sons and nephews of Vahanik for the salvation of my soul and the forgiveness of my sins. I gave this as a gift by means of Lord Yakob, bishop of Siwnik', to the church of Saint Grigor at the blessed monastery of Tat'ev, which was built by my grandfather, P'ilippe'. This is for the salvation of my soul and for the forgiveness of my sins. I give [these properties] with everything in their their boundaries: mountains, fields, lands, waters, vineyards, walnut trees, mills, and all income. From this time forth [g12] for all eternity, you have the authority to eat of and enjoy these places and to sell them and use them as a pledge. They are free from all royal taxes. Should anyone come out against this [arrangement] or attempt to obstruct or overturn it—be he from among us or other senior folk—may he be cursed by the Holy Trinity and all the saints, and be judged along with Judas and Arius and excommunicated by the three holy councils. Should a Tachik achieve sovereignty here and try to ravish [the property] may he be rejected by God and by his prophet (*p'eghambar*) and may he receive 1,000 curses (*nalat'*) and may his face be blackened at the final tribunal. And now, holy fathers, I beseech you to make, without opposition, an annual remembrance with a quarantine for me, P'ilippe', here in my church of Saint Grigor, on the day of the Transfiguration. We wrote and stamped this with our signet ring in 392 of the Armenian Era [A.D. 943]."

**[142]** Now it happened that opposite the monastery there was a place where rebels dwelled, called Tamaleks. They worked many very grave damages and harassments against the monks. Lord Yovhanne's, though he tried numerous times, was unable to chase those residents away and expropriate the land. But in the period of the God-honored and spiritual [g13] Lord Yakob, the great Lady (*tikin*) Sop'ia, Smbat's wife, came to worship the Holy Cross. She heard about the painful bitterness which the brethren were experiencing from them, and, exerting great efforts, she was barely able to acquire that place after paying 1,000 *dahekans*. She handed this over to Lord Yakob and thus removed that encumbrance from them. Thereafter [the brethren] were secure. She ordered the bishop to build a church there and to house hermits there, and she ordered him to write an inscription with curses so that lay folk no longer reside there. The delighted bishop quickly did this and wrote an inscription with the following content:

"I, Lord Yakob, bishop of Siwnik', wrote this deed with my own hand. After much labor and effort I got rid of the Tamaleks who had inflicted numerous harassments on our House. Lord Yovhanne's had tried unsuccessfully to get rid of them. Comporting themselves with our commands, Lord Smbat and Lady Sop'ia purchased [the place] for 1,000 *dahekans* and gave it to the Holy Cross, and entrusted themselves to us, body and soul. We took [the place] and built a church there and a community of monks. We received this as patrimony with great effort and established a retreat here. Should anyone try to give this as patrimony or settle married folk here or take control [g14] of a single tree or shrub, may that person be anathematized by the Holy Trinity, the blessed angels, the 318 patriarchs, by the blessed Cross and by us, in life and in death. May he share the lot of Judas and lead a short life full of wicked pains, and may he be kindling for the unquenchable fires of Gehenna. May he not find mercy from Christ, our God."

**[143]** Now there was another village named Vaghawer in the district of Gegham by the border of Sodk'. In remote antiquity this had been given by Tigran the great patriarch of the line of Sisak to the blessed church of

Tat'ev. Then, because of its remoteness, it had been sold and exchanged by Lord Yakob to Prince Dzagik of Siwnik', son of Jevanshe'r for the village of Tashtakert with an authentic and unbreakable deed, as follows:

"By the will of God, I, Lord Yakob, bishop of Siwnik', exchanged with Dzagik, prince of Siwnik', the village of Vaghawer which the aforementioned Lord Tigran had given to the Holy Cross for the sake of his soul with the village of Tashtakert with all its borders. And we have designated annually that 20 days of masses be celebrated until the coming of Christ, with the obligation during these days to sing the psalm 'Blessed is he whose sins are forgiven.' Now should someone after us—either a prince or a [religious] [g15] leader—oppose this and plot to ravish this property, may he be wickedly cursed by God and all the saints, by this see, all the Apostolic churches and the blessed patriarchs, and may he be held accountable for the sins of Tigran. By the will of God this authentic [deed] was made in 374 of the Armenian Era [A.D. 925].

And I, Prince Dzagik, voluntarily made this deed and exchanged Dashtakert with Vaghawer and authenticated the aforementioned deed with my hand. Should someone obstruct this [bequest] may he be subject to the same anathemas mentioned in it. We, Jevanshe'r and Vasak, sons of Lord Dzagik, are witnesses to this action. And I, Prince Ktrich, am a witness to the aforementioned [deed]. This document was written and stamped with Lord Yakob's patriarchal signet ring, and we have also placed our seals on it."

Behold, all of this was the result of the magnificent care taken by Lord Yakob: the beautiful embellishments, diverse enhancements and acquisitions. Moreover, there were added to this much property purchased for silver: fields, farms, lands, meadows and vineyards. Beyond these were many gifts from princes and *azats*. Were I to record them all, it would require some effort and fatigue the audience. Instead, we have made a selection of a few examples from many, choosing and presenting what was most interesting [g16]. Alas, these words of mine! For I regret that I cannot continue to write about the life of this godly, regal, and wonderful man. No, now I must turn to different deeds and events—savage ones.

---

[144]

## 52.

***The rebellion of Yakob; the end of his life; the coming to Siwnik' three times by Anania, kat'oghikos of the Armenians; the ordination of Bishop Vahan; and the submission of the Aghuans.***

The *kat'oghikos* of the Aghuans, who was named Sahak, had cordial spiritual ties with Lord Yakob. They shared the same views and were very close. After [the tenure of] Sahak, his brother, Gagik, led [the Aghuan Church]. [Gagik] was even more fervent in his attachment to Yakob, bishop of Siwnik'. Now it happened that because of the perpetual incursions of the Ishmaelites during this period, the Armenian *kat'oghikoi* were absent from the see at Dvin and travelled around here and there with the Armenian kings. At times they dwelled with Gagik, king [g17] of the land of Vaspurakan [staying] in the monastery at Dzor where the altar, throne, and staff of Saint Gregory were located. At times they dwelled in Shirakvan, in the district of Shirak at the monastery of Argina. And so, they were always moving. In the meantime T'eodoros, *kat'oghikos* of the Armenians [T'eodoros I R'shtuni, 930-941] had died. In 390 of the Armenian Era [A.D. 941] he was succeeded by Anania of Mekk' [Anania Mokats'i, 946-968]. Now due to the distance involved, this Yakob was unable to go to the *kat'oghikos* of the Armenians every year to get chrism. He was obliged to request chrism from the *kat'oghikos* of the Aghuans. This [action] became a major stumbling block for him and led to irreparable collapse. And this was because of human nature, always capable of error. In the words of Solomon: "Even the wise man falls asleep."

[Yakob] did this because of his presumptuous nature. He was a tall, vain, and haughty individual, a good talker gifted with eloquence, bright and fresh, and because of this he was a bit too taken with himself, and proud. Now *Kat'oghikos* Anania had summoned Yakob and Sahak by means of nuncios, but neither of them budged from their sees. Rather, they gave pretexts for not going. When the *kat'oghikos* heard of the intimacy these two shared, about the request for chrism from the Aghuans, and about the fact that for many years Yakob had not come to the see of Saint Gregory [g18], he was transported with rage. He decided that either Yakob must submit to his will or else receive very severe punishment. After [dealing with] that he would go to the Aghuans and make them submit too, since the Aghuan archbishops were ordained by the *kat'oghikos* of the Armenians. However, [the Aghuans] had not done this for some years previously, from the death of *Kat'oghikos* Ge'org until the time of Anania, that is, during the tenure of five *kat'oghikoi*—Mashtots', Yovhannes', Step'annos, Eghishe', and T'e'odoros.

[*Kat'oghikos* Anania] arrived in the land of Sisakan and the God-protected princes of Siwnik' came before him, Lord Smbat and Lord Jevanshe'r in Baghk'. They brought him to the episcopate at Tat'ev where they accorded him the greatest honors. And then Bishop Yakob arrived. He knelt and confessed his sins before him, saying: "O venerable Lord *Kat'oghikos*, because you have deigned to visit us and have overlooked our boldness in a divine manner, we submit to you and to the see of Saint Gregory the Illuminator as if to God. We have sinned against heaven and against you. Pardon us and forgive our trespasses." Seeing this, the *kat'oghikos* blessed him greatly and thanked him [g19] and then wanted to proceed to the Aghuans. But just then sad tidings arrived from King Abas about the passing of his queen. And so [*Kat'oghikos* Anania] withdrew from his intention. Prince Smbat and Bishop Yakob set him on his journey back to his see loaded with very splendid gifts and generous presents.

[145] But the most wicked [Satan], who is always envious of good and who incites people to evil and contention, would not leave this alone. Rather, [Satan] insinuated himself into the hearts of evil and envious men who again began to slander Yakob to the *kat'oghikos*, claiming that he had "rebelled again from you and was not allowing the Aghuans to submit to you and, furthermore, he made Xosrov, bishop of the Andzewats'ik', to deviate from you in writing, and had joined the heretics by secretly professing Chalcedonianism." And thus did they create a great disturbance and fight within the Church. I regard these accusations against Bishop Yakob as slanderous falsehoods. What benefit or glory would accrue to him to leave [the jurisdiction of] the great see of Saint Gregory the Illuminator and instead serve its servants whose own ordinations had been incomplete and imperfect? But let us leave such an investigation to God the just.

Sahak, *kat'oghikos* of the Aghuans, died [g20] and was succeeded in office by his brother Gagik, installed with an imperfect ordination. When Lord Anania heard about this, he wrote a letter to the Aghuan princes in his wise manner ordering them to stay clear of the so-called and useless *Kat'oghikos* Gagik. And they did so, excepting only a prince named Senek'erim. The rest, unitedly sent a certain [man] named Yo'nan to the *kat'oghikos* of the Armenians so that he ordain him as archbishop for them. Lord Anania received [Yo'nan] with pleasure and honor, ordained him, and sent him back to the Aghuans. Meanwhile some folk, due to jealousy and hostility, began to make slanderous and unfounded accusations against Yo'nan. There was no small agitation between the two, Gagik and Yo'nan, and there was reciprocal animosity.

[146] When Anania heard about all this, he was very concerned about any divisions or rebellions in the Church. Assembling a multitude of bishops and chief fathers [of the monasteries] and bearing the cross of martyrdom, he went seeking the members who had scattered and separated, and then he headed toward Aghuania. When he reached the district of Xach'en, Prince Grigor came out before him and led him to his home [g21]. He assembled all the princes of the land and the bishops and monastics at a place called Ardash. Gagik and Yo'nan also came. *Kat'oghikos* Anania requested the *History of the Aghuans* so that they might observe the status of the Aghuan pontiffs. But they resolutely hid [this book] from him and would not show it. However, through providence from On High during the evening service, the warden of Gandzasar brought

forth a book as though it were [the writings of] John Chrysostom, and they invited the *kat'oghikos* to read it. Now when he opened it, he found that it was the book he had requested, namely, the *History of the Aghuans*. In it everything was accurately recorded about how the first bishop of the Aghuans received ordination from Saint Gregory, Illuminator of the Armenians, at the request of King Ur'nayr of the Aghuans, and how for 440 years [the heads of the Aghuan Church] obeyed the occupants of the see of the Armenians, how the Aghuan *kat'oghikos* received ordination from the Armenians. This was because the Armenians were the patriarchs whereas the Aghuans were archbishops. It was thus during the tenures of 25 Armenian *kat'oghikoi*, until the time of Lord Abraham [Abraham I, Aghbat'anets'i, 607-615]. Then there was disorder in the lands and a certain Yovhan in the Byzantine sector [of Armenia] was seated as a counter-*kat'oghikos*, because of Byzantine attempts to introduce nine grades [of clergy] among the Armenians. And then Kiwrion, *kat'oghikos* of the Iberians/Georgians separated from the Armenians and became Chalcedonian, because of the disease of pridefulness. Thereafter [g22] the Aghuans also broke away on some pretext or other.

After the deaths of Abraham and Yovhanne's, Komitas sat as patriarch of the Armenians [Komitas I Aghts'ets'i, 615-628]. The Aghuans' [*kat'oghikos*] also died. Once more the Aghuans obeyed the Armenians and requested that Komitas ordain a *kat'oghikos* for them, which he did in the second year of his patriarchate. Thereafter they remained in obeience for 85 years, throughout the tenures of seven Armenian *kat'oghikoi*, until the reign of Lord Eghia [Eghia I Archeshets'i, 703-717]. In his day there lived a woman named Spram who was first lady (*tikin*, "queen") of the Aghuans. She took a man named Bakur as her confidant and lover and promised to give him the dignity of *kat'oghikos*. However, for fear of reprimand she did not send him to Armenia. Rather, she convened an assembly in Partaw and had him ordained *kat'oghikos*. He was named Nerse's and secretly held Chalcedonianism. As a result of this, *Kat'oghikos* Eghia went to the Aghuan court by order of the court [of the Caliphate]. He seized the lady and Bakur, stripped them, tied them to each other, put them on an ass and had them led through the streets of Partaw. Bakur died eight days later as a result of not eating.

[147] Then *Kat'oghikos* Eghia ordained an archbishop for them and extracted an oath and written commitment sanctioned by severe anathemas from the princes and bishops [g23], the principal monastics and senior *tanute*'rs of the land of the Aghuans that thereafter they would not deviate from or separate from those occupying the see of Saint Gregory. Then [Eghia] himself returned to the land of Armenia. And so matters remained for the next 137 years, throughout the tenures of fourteen Armenian *kat'oghikoi*, until [the *kat'oghikosate* of] Lord Ge'org Gar'nets'i [Gevorg II Gar'nets'i, 877-897]. When the emir Bugha came among the Armenians and captured the *kat'oghikos* Lord Ge'org, bitter and very distressing disorders occurred in the lands of the Armenians and the Aghuans. The court bishop of Lord Ge'org, a man named Yo'nan, fled and came to the Aghuans. At this time the archbishop of the Aghuans had died and the *kat'oghikos* was in captivity. Considering the court bishop Yo'nan compatible, they assembled and ordained him *kat'oghikos* of the Aghuans. Now when Ge'org returned from captivity through the agency of Hamam, king of the Aghuans, and when he saw Yo'nan as their archbishop, [Ge'org] ordered that Yo'nan's vestments and dignity as *kat'oghikos* be taken away from him. And then Hamam prostrated himself before [Ge'org] and begged forgiveness.

[Ge'org] heeded this because of his deep gratitude [to the Aghuan king]. Thus [Ge'org] ordained Yo'nan a second time as archbishop of the Aghuans, and then departed for his own see. Now following the death of Ge'org, due to the bitter vicissitudes experienced in the land because of the Ishmaelites, [the Aghuans] were unable [g24] to come to the Armenian patriarchs, nor were the Armenian *kat'oghikoi* able to concern themselves about this matter since everyone then was only looking for some way to save themselves from the sword of the Ishmaelites. After Yo'nan they ordained as *kat'oghikoi*: Sime'on, his true brother, and then Dawit', then Sahak, and then the aforementioned Gagik. This brought to 69 years their independent, anarchic, and incomplete ordinations. Now *Kat'oghikos* Anania read and learned all of this [in the *History of the Aghuans*] and employing these very words he silenced the mouths of lying men and their vain language

which their boasting had inspired, and he shamed them all. Then the princes learned the truth of the matter and completely submitted to him. [Anania], examining what the proper course should be, first removed Yo'nan from his ordination because of the lies which had been told, and then [he removed] Gagik. But Prince Grigor implored [Anania] with great entreaties to ordain Gagik a second time, something the orthodox and judicious patriarch considered improper, [reasoning that] a second birth would have been stillborn and a second ordination would be considered illegitimate.

**[148]** Then [the Aghuans] suggested that [the Armenians] return to Armenia, saying: "We will select the most suitable man and send him to you to ordain as [g25] our leader." The patriarch believed them. He left the House of the Aghuans and came to the House of Sisakan, to the residence of the blessed patriarchate in Tat'ev. Now when Bishop Yakob heard about this, he went to the fortress of Baghk' to hide his face in accordance with [Scriptural] advice to "Flee and hide yourself for now until the wrath of the Lord has passed." This was because [Yakob] knew that various slanders and calumnies had been unjustly hurled at him, as though some tried to merge iron and wood, or mercury and gold. Now when Lord Anania saw this, he stayed there for many days. [Anania] sent many letters and messengers to get Yakob free from Jevanshe'r's hands, but [Jevanshe'r] did not let him out. Meanwhile, because it was wintertime, [the *kat'oghikos*] could not remain in that spot. The blessed *kat'oghikos* became filled with wrath and he wrecked and demolished the place [where he had been staying]. Furthermore, he pronounced fearsome anathemas on the prince and the bishop who were joined [in the rebellion]. And then [Anania] returned to his see.

[*Kat'oghikos* Anania] remained there and despite constant correspondence he was unable to convince Gagik the Aghuan [and Yakob Siwnet'si] to submit to him. All he could do was to entreat God to find some resolution. This occurred in 398 of the Armenian Era [A.D. 949]. Now in 407 of the Armenian Era [A.D. 958], perhaps through divine providence [g26], the two of them died: Yakob, the metropolitan of Siwnik' and head of all the bishops of the Armenians, and Gagik, archbishop of the Aghuans. [Gagik], after Anania had returned [to Armenia], foolishly rebelled and violated his oath. When the tidings [of the deaths] reached the *kat'oghikos*, he was moved—since he believed that his prayers had helped in this and he greatly thanked the Lord. Yet he did not think it appropriate that the Apostolic see which he had wrecked should be deprived of patriarchal leaders. Thus he went to the land of Sisakan, to the uninhabited place of the episcopate of Siwnik', and ordered that clerics assemble and [re]build the place. He himself departed for the city of Kapan. Meanwhile, the excommunicated Prince Jevanshe'r came before him and confessed his sins with great contrition. The crown prince of Siwnik', Vasak son of Smbat, son of Ashot, also appeared and nicely confessed his sins. Thus did the two of them receive forgiveness for their actions. With great splendor they conducted [*Kat'oghikos* Anania] to the royal seat in the city of Kapan.

**[149]** The austere monastic ascetics assembled and requested again that they have a leader. Heeding this, [*Kat'oghikos* Anania] designated as head of the episcopate of Siwnik' Jevanshe'r's son Vahan, who was head [g27] of the great congregation of Vahanuvank'. And he extracted from Vahan and from the princes a written agreement that thereafter they would no longer deviate or stray from the see of Saint Gregory, nor ally themselves with the archbishop of the Aghuans, to prevent the recurrence of such a scandal. At the end of this document with its many provisions they added frightening and terrible anathemas so that none of the bishops do, attempt, or even plan criminal deeds such as Yakob had done; that none of the princes dare to support, aid, or protect such a one; that should one of the bishops be so brazen, that they would hand him over to the *kat'oghikos*; and that such a one not find refuge or asylum. They sealed this deed with their signet rings and gave it to the *kat'oghikos*. We regard it as superfluous to write more about this since the entire document is available in the *Book of Letters*, which [*Kat'oghikos*] Anania compiled and is called *Letter on Faith (Hawatoy namak)*. However, [*Kat'oghikos* Anania] temporarily removed from the House of Siwnik' certain honors which had been accorded to it by the first kings and patriarchs of the Armenians, [namely,] the cross which was carried before [the bishop] and the costly and precious staff, and the cushion woven with gold thread,

which they carried around with them. This prohibition was in effect until the time of Lord Yovhanne's, bishop of Siwnik' and Lord Sargis, *kat'oghikos* of the Armenians [g28].

In its proper place I will narrate the restoration of all the honor and authority of the occupants of the [ecclesiastical] throne of Siwnik' with the ordination of Lord Yovhanne's by Lord Sargis, *kat'oghikos* of the Armenians [c. 1006].

After so arranging matters, the *kat'oghikos* [Anania] went to the Aghuans to [re]establish [the hierarchical order] of their see. Afterwards, sad tidings reached him about [the death of] the king of Vaspurakan named Grigor Ardžruni, and saying: "his body awaits you" [for burial].

[150] Hearing about this, the lords of the Aghuans, Ishhanik, Senek'erim, and the other Senek'erim, son of Grigor, whom I mentioned earlier, and also Jevanshe'r and Gurge'n, confessed their sins with great contrition. They sent [to *Kat'oghikos* Anania] the cleric Dawit' of Xotakerats' monastery so that [Anania] would ordain him as their [spiritual] leader. Lord Anania received [Dawit'] and ordained him with splendid honor. Then he sent him back to the land of the Aghuans with lavish presents and generous gifts. For this [development] praise and glory in all languages was raised to benevolent God Who had thus ended a great war in the Church and brought peace to our divided and miserable Armenian people; and reunited the respectable members of [the body] of the Church, which had been separated from their venerable head [g29], the great patriarch of the Armenians, who are the co-adjutors of Saint Gregory.

And now, after such battles, should anyone think about or plan to travel down such a road to ruin and, standing back from the *kat'oghikoi* of the Armenians—be it the bishop of Siwnik' or the archbishop of the Aghuans—for whatever reason except for spiritual harm [for example] if he should introduce heresy or some inappropriate innovation, may such a one be anathematized by the Holy Trinity and share the fate of the heretics and be ranked with the apostates and be tried and condemned with Satan. Moreover, should they know of some harm to the faith or to the Church, this must be examined for accuracy by the *kat'oghikoi* of the Armenians. Should there rise some grave fault and harm which would infect many [people] and become the cause of ruin, they themselves will know what is the proper [action] until the shortcoming is corrected and completely cleansed.

[151]

---

## 53.

### *Regarding Lord Vahan and the end of his life.*

In Yovhannu monastery, Lord Anania had ordained Vahan bishop of Siwnik', and [g30], under his direction was the great Bishops' Palace (*episkoposaran*) of Tat'ev. For a short while, [Vahan] resided there and at other times [he resided] in his own home. Because of the destruction of the area many of its splendors had diminished and many good arrangements had been obstructed for a long time. Many legacies were lacking and had been ravaged from the Church at the great monastic complex of Tat'ev. Gradually, over time, the princes returned them. One such [restorer] was the pious Lord Smbat, prince of Siwnik', son of Sahak, son of Ashot, and brother of the great Smbat, who returned the villages of Tsatsard and Hazhnis to the blessed church at the hands of Lord Vahan. He wrote a deed of provisions in his own hand. It had this content:

"In the name of God, to strengthen the [provisions of] the first document by which our fathers had given [legacies] to the God-honored and spiritual bishops of Siwnik', I, Smbat, son of Lord Sahak, give [the villages of] Hazhis and Tsatsard, which for a short while had been ravished from my

House, to the God-honored and spiritual Lord Vahan and to the God-inhabited and radiant church of Tat'ev, on the condition that they renew the memory of the first [donors] and that they remember me in their blessed and pure prayers and request forgiveness for our sins. After us, let no one dare to ravage [g31] [these bequests] from the House, neither one of our own nor a foreigner. Should they be so brazen, may they be cursed by the mouth of Almighty God along with Satan and the serpent. And may they receive the lot of Judas, Cain, and Arius. We wrote this and stamped it with our signet ring in the year 412 of the Armenian Era [A.D. 963]."

Now Vahan had been bishop for six years, when the *kat'oghikos* of the Armenians, Lord Anania, died. He was laid to rest at the monastery of Argina. Then King Ashot, son of Smbat, held a meeting of bishops and holy fathers in the city of Shirakawan, the royal residence. He also summoned Vahan of Siwnik' and ordered that one individual should be selected from among the bishops and seated on the throne of the patriarchs of the Armenians.

[152] The entire assembly chose Vahan, for his superior holiness and wisdom. Then a multitude of the bishops laid on hands and ordained him *kat'oghikos* of the Armenians. Now [Vahan], after waiting a year, began to bring images from Iberia/Georgia and to place them on the altar. And he ordered all churches to do likewise according to the Roman practise with icons—to adorn the altars with them and to not conduct mass without them. For this reason the opinion was held by everyone that [Vahan] was allied with the Byzantines and wanted to infect the Church with their heresy. They complained to the king, and he ordered that an assembly be convened [g32] in the city of Ani to examine what was appropriate. When Vahan learned about this, he did not attend the meeting. Rather, he arose and went to the land of Vaspurakan, to Hamazasp, son of King Gagik, whom he convinced about himself. [Vahan] also claimed that he was being slandered by envious men. He established residence in the monastery named Dzoroyvank'.

Now once those who had assembled in Ani learned about [Vahan's] departure, by order of King Ashot they put another person in his place as *kat'oghikos* and removed Vahan. And thus, for two years it remained—Step'annos was seated as *kat'oghikos* in Ani [Step'annos III of Sevan, 969-972], while Vahan [I, of Siwnik', 968-969] was in Vaspurakan. They filled up our land with [mutual] anathemas until, through Divine Providence, both of them died on the very same day. Vahan was buried there at Dzoroy monastery by the church door among the other *kat'oghikoi* who had been buried there. Meanwhile, they seated on the patriarchal throne of the Armenians, the worthy Lord Xachik [I, Arsharunets'i, 973-992], a blood relation of Lord Step'annos.

---

[153]

## 54.

### ***The bishops of Siwnik' who were designated after Lord Vahan.***

After Vahan they seated in his place as bishop a widower cleric named Ashot, who was renowned for his superlative asceticism [g33] and prudence. He was beloved by the princes and prominent to everyone in the district. [Earlier,] he himself had ordained Vahan as *kat'oghikos*. Now this Ashot had a son named Yovhannes, a bishop who had been raised with great solicitude and reached maturity in modesty and spirituality, talented and gifted. They ordained [Yovhannes's] bishop of Siwnik'. His father, Lord Ashot, had occupied the [ecclesiastical] throne for 17 years and then entrusted it to his own son, Lord Yovhannes, and occupied himself with prayer. Yovhannes died after occupying [the episcopacy] for six and a half years. Then they forced his father, Ashot, to [re]occupy the same throne. He did so for five and a half years, before he himself died. After him, Lord Samue'l, a modest and good man, served for five years before he died.

Then they selected a good and very competent man named Yakob, who had been raised in holiness and celibacy and established him in the position of bishop of Siwnik'. In his day there died Smbat, lord of Siwnik', son of Sahak, and he was laid to rest at the Bishops' Palace at Tat'ev. This Smbat himself had placed a crown on his head and ruled as king. His pious wife, the blessed Queen Shahanduxt and her sons, Vasak and Sewada, gave to the blessed church 6,000 *drams* and [g34] the village of Tegh in Haband district which Shahanduxt herself had built in an uncultivated spot, for the soul of the pious and God-loving King Smbat. And they wrote the following document, full of very great curses, to prevent anyone from confounding it:

**[154]** "In the name of God, it is my will, I, Shahanduxt, daughter of Sewada, to give the hamlet named Tegh in Haband district with all its borders, mountains, fields, and other income, which my King Smbat gave to me and where I built this hamlet in an uncultivated spot. After the departure from this world of my venerable king, I give it for his soul to the blessed monastery complex of Tat'ev and to the Holy Cross, by means of the bishop of Siwnik', Lord Yakob. Henceforth I and my sons Vasak and Sewada are no longer the owners, since I have given [Tegh] by the hand of God and the Holy Cross. Now it is required that every year on the Feast of Transfiguration (*Vardavar*) there be recited for the soul of my king fifty masses, and that on each of the days the psalm be recited, which begins 'Blessed are those whose sins are forgiven.' You blessed patriarchs who succeed on the throne are obliged to fulfil these [terms] without hindrance, and you shall eat [the produce] of this hamlet, free of all taxation. May God make this acceptable. Now should any of our descendants, or foreigners, or nobles, for whatever reason after our [g35] passing think to remove this hamlet of Tegh from Tat'ev and/or go against our spiritual [provisions]; should a king, evil or otherwise, impose a tax [on the property], may such a one not enjoy what belongs to him, and may he be held accountable for the sins of all kinds of evil doers, and may he be condemned along with Judas and Pilate. May he be cursed with the antichrist and tortured in the uquenchable fire and be anathematized by the 318 patriarchs. Now should a Tachik have seniority and attempt to ravish it, may he be cursed by his faith and prophet (*p'eghambar*) and from the [time of the] first man [by all prophets] who have been and will be, forever. May fire fall on his head from the sky; may the earth produce thorns and thistles for such a one; may his name be lost and blotted out along with the names of his children and their beloved ones. May his memory never be recalled.

For added confirmation I, Vasak, son of King Smbat, have written this deed with my own hand, at my mother's command. May God accept it. [Done] in 447 of the Armenian Era [A.D. 998] and stamped with our signet rings.

[Confirmation] is also the order of myself, Yakob, [bishop] of the House of Siwnik', occupant of the [ecclesiastical] throne at the temple of Tat'ev, in whom our venerable king placed confidence. It is obligatory that [the provisions of this deed] for his memory be carried out without obstruction and also that the quarantines [be recited for him], for the hamlet of Tegh. We have witnessed this with our signature and bound it with unbreakable strictures against those who are contrary [g36] and, by the will of God, we have stamped it with our signet ring.

By the grace of God, I, too, Grigor, bishop of Siwnik', confirm this deed regarding the hamlet of Tegh which has been given by the blessed Queen Shahanduxt and her sons to the Holy Church in memory of their peace-loving and comely King Smbat. Let no one dare to take this from the holy see. Let those who oppose it be ripped to shreds and perish with Simon Magus, and be cursed by God and all the saints. May the memorial which [Smbat's family] has designated for him on the holidays be conducted without hindrance."

**[155]** This Yakob died after a few years. I believe that he was killed treacherously by those folk of Ts'ura who lived above the Ts'ura ravine. [Yakob's] grave is there, where healings take place. Grigor was succeeded in his

position by Grigor, who shone with all goodness both within and externally. He performed many glorious deeds in the House of the Patriarchs. Moreover, he demolished to the foundation that rock of Ts'ur which had been inhabited by accursed people. From Prince Dzagik's son, P'araj, as a gift for his soul, [Grigor] acquired Bolorak'ar with all its boundaries, excepting a portion at Noravank', which subsequently was acquired by another Lord Grigor, from Dlen, Xaghbak's son. P'araj's deed was as follows [g37]:

"In the name of God, this deed was written by my own hand. I, P'araj, son of Prince Dzag, after reading what had been written by our predecessors, have again confirmed the giving of Bolorak'ar with its borders to this blessed church of Tat'ev and to Lord Gregory, out of my personal inheritance. Earlier, it had already been part of their patrimony, but, after a short while, it had been alienated due to disturbances at the Bishops' Palace. Again we confirm the same [bequest] with its vineyards, trees, and plants, with its land and water [as belonging] to the blessed monastic complex of Tat'ev, to the Holy Cross and the blessed Apostle, by the hand of Lord Grigor, bishop of Siwnik'. I give this voluntarily, under no compulsion from the nobles, and not in drunkenness. Rather, frightened by the fearsome curses of previous patriarchs and princes, I give it with the joy of my soul. Do not forget my masterless and sinful soul, O you holy lords and blessed congregations. Rather, make it worthy, through memorial and prayers. Now, should anyone become the cause of the obstruction and confounding of these gifts and depriving my soul, and be unmoved by the old anathemas and my own—may such a person be cursed by the most Holy Trinity and be covered in shame on his judgement day. May he share the lot of Judas. For confirmation we have stamped this with the signet ring of our God-crowned King [g38] Vasak, and our blessed patriarch, Lord Grigor."

Subsequently, after living a short time, Lord Grigor passed away. He was succeeded in his position by that fortunate and blessed man of God, Lord Yovhanne's, a second Illuminator and second renewer of that reduced House and of our entire land of Siwnik'. He was a blood relation to Lord Sargis, *kat'oghikos* of the Armenians and, with great activity and noteworthy splendor, occupied the blessed throne for more than 50 years. I will relate his deeds and words in the proper place. Now, however, it is necessary for me to turn aside [from clerics and the Church] and briefly to mention the princes and their circumstances.

---

[156]

## 55.

### ***Brief accounts; the order [or precedence] of the princes of Siwnik'; and their reigns as kings in later times.***

In describing the origins of the princes of Siwnik' and their order [of rule] which we learned about and put in this book, we began with Andovk and proceeded as far as K'urd. Then two or three princes were unknown to us. But once again there resumed reign by [familiar] princes of Siwnik'. First, Vasak [g39], who was the great patriarch (*nahapet*) of Siwnik'. He was succeeded by his two sons, P'ilippe' and Sahak, and another Prince Grigor from the same clan who had a special inheritance in the patrimonial property. Now there were many branches and families. However, our attention turns only to the chief royal princely families. As such, we have written here what we read and learned about [this senior group].

Following the death of Vasak, his two sons, P'ilippe' and Sahak, divided their patrimonial inheritance. P'ilippe' became the crown prince (*gahere'ts' ishxan*). Sahak took in his portion all the district of Gegham. P'ilippe' died and left three sons: Babge'n, Vasak, and Ashot. After a short while, Sahak also died, in a battle with the emir Hawl, by the banks of the Hrazdan River, near the hamlet of Kawakert. He left as heir his son Grigor, called Sup'an. And then, after some days, an insignificant dispute over their patrimony led to warfare between Babge'n, the senior son of P'ilippe', and Grigor, Sahak's son. Babge'n was stronger and killed Grigor—thereby

inheriting Cain's fate. Then he himself was expunged from life, leaving a son named Vahan. P'ilippe' inherited [rule over] the lordship. Now Grigor had left [g40] two sons, Vasak, who was called Gabur', and Hrahat. However, [Grigor] also had left two brothers: Hrahat and Gagik. Vasak Gabur' inherited his lordship. [Vasak] also took to wife Mariam, daughter of Ashot Bagratui who earlier had become [a] king of the Armenians. Then P'ilippe' died leaving as his heir Babge'n, who also died, and Vasak (who also was called Ishxanik) and Ashot. Then Vasak died and his brother, Ashot, inherited his lordship. He lived a long time and died, leaving four sons: Smbat, Sahak, Babge'n, and Vasak. They divided their inheritance: Smbat took all of Vayots'dzor and Shahapawn, which is the district of Chahuk. Sahak and the rest took Siwnik', Baghk', and other places. And there was also the great Vasak's son, named P'ilippe', who held Shnhe'r and Hamband.

**[157]** Vasak Gabur', Grigor Sup'an's son, died leaving three sons: Grigor, who also was called Sup'an, Sahak, and Vasak. His lordship was inherited by Grigor Sup'an who, through some divine oversight, occupied himself with building churches and doing spiritual deeds. Now Smbat's younger brother, Vasak, died in battle with the emir of Goght'n, by Ernjak fortress [g41]. Then Smbat himself took the senior position in the principality and wrought many praiseworthy deeds, spiritual and physical. He died and left his son, Vasak, as heir to his lordship. Now Smbat's brother, Sahak, had a son named Smbat. Sahak died and his son, Smbat, took his principality. There was also in Baghk' a prince from the same clan, by the name of Jevanshe'r, son of Prince Dzag. As for Grigor Sup'an, after displaying much bravery and noteworthy deeds, he died—poisoned to death by Nsr. His brother, Vasak, inherited his lordship. Sahak died and was laid to rest by the door of Noratus church. As for Smbat's son, Vasak, he died after a long reign full of praiseworthy deeds. Then all of our land of Sisakan was ruled by Smbat, Sahak's son, who reigned as senior prince.

And now, O valued reader, listen and I will give you news of marvellous things. For the line of Sisak, which descended from Hayk, sometimes mixed with the royal clan of the Arshakunis/Arsacids and Pahlaws, and sometimes with the Khazar kingdom, and, later on, with the Bagratids; but they never rebelled from their patrimonial lords. Subsequently, [this happened] a long time later, after they had opened the door—first the Artsrunis, who donned crowns against Smbat, king [g42] of the Armenians. [Then others did this, including] Atr-Nerse'h, the *bdeashx* of Iberia/Georgia who put a crown on his head, and also Hamam of Aghuania. Afshin exalted Vasak Siwnik' and [wanted to] crown him, but [Vasak] did not want to inherit the name of a rebel. Now with the weakening of the Bagratid lordship and the strengthening of the hands of the Ishmaelites, all the thrones of the senior lords divided and separated—those of Vaspurakan and the Iberians/Georgians, the Aghuans and [lords of] Dzoroyget, who are called Kiwrikeans, as well as [the lords of] Kars and Vanand, who are called Baseans.

**[158]** Smbat, son of Sahak, son of Ashot, had as a wife Shahanduxt, the daughter of Sewada, the great and glorious prince of the Aghuans. He gave his granddaughter, Katramide' (who was the daughter of his son, Vasak, who ruled after him) as a wife to Ashot's son, King Gagik. [It was he] who built the astonishing and marvellous great cathedral church at Ani. [Smbat] was attached to the great Atabak in Tavre'zh in the land of Atrpatakan and also to the emir R'an, who ruled the Darband Gate, as well as to the Aghuan lords. Because of their great love for him they informed the great Sultan of Khurasan and, receiving an order from him, placed a crown on the head of the Haykid Smbat, lord of Siwnik', who was an attractive and appealing man. And since in that period [g43] the Bagratids only ruled in Shirak and Ayrarat as far as Gegham and Uxti, and as far as Karin and to the borders of Vaspurakan, and as far as Dzoroyget and to Gardman, and since Siwnik' was cut off from them, Smbat was not considered guilty of any criminal misdeed [by assuming the crown]. If the Bagratids, who had been brought [to Armenia] as captives by Hrach'e', now had become worthy [of kingship], would it not be even more fitting that the genuine sons of Hayk, where venerable descent passed from fathers to sons (and continues to the present) should rule [as kings] in their native lordship? And so Smbat donned a crown with rich and splendid grandeur and organized his kingdom after the manner of independent kings. [King Smbat] died after performing many glorious and noteworthy royal deeds. In a

solemn ceremony, his body was placed in the great sanctuary of the God-inhabited see at Tat'ev with a large assembly of people in attendance.

[Smbat's] lordship was inherited by his young son, Vasak. He, too, in a magnificent gathering and in the presence of a multitude of nobles, was anointed king of Siwnik' and Baghk' by Lord Grigor, bishop of Siwnik'. [King Vasak] designated his brother, Sevada, as prince of princes of his nobles' troops. At this time their mother, the venerable Queen Shahanduxt, was still living. Moved by some divine [g44] inspiration, she built the elegant and lovely monastery of Vaghatn. From long since this had been a place of [habitation] for men of vows, for there was a church in that spot from ancient times in the name of Saint Grigor Lusavoritch'. We believe that [St. Gregory] founded it. Subsequently, it was built [up] by the blessed hermit, Father Step'annos. [The place] gave healing to those bitten by poisonous snakes, as at P'arbi, where man and beast are cured of maddening, incurable pains. We note that even now amazing miracles take place there. For people who have been afflicted by such toxins—even though they are blackened and their swellings are close to bursting—when they are taken from the mountain highlands and shown the monastery, or even if a small bit of soil from the church is given to them—these people immediately are relieved of the swelling caused by the poisons, and are speedily healed.

Thus the great and pious Shahanduxt built there a church of cut stones in the name of the blessed proto-martyr in 449 of the Armenian Era [A.D. 1000]. [She also built there] a home for clerics and the numerous servitors, as well as a chapel made of cemented stones by the church door, storage areas and workshops, as well as a wall around the monastery. She also gave fields at Vaghatn and the Gomer farm to the monastery. And she gloriously decorated the church with various adornments. When [Lady Shahanduxt] died, she was buried [g45] by the door of that sanctuary. Now after some years, in 455 [A.D. 1006], Sevada, who was Shahanduxt's son, the brother of King Vasak, also built a costly church, splendid and elegant, and domed, in the name of Saint Karapet with a portico near the entrance, where they are buried. May their memories be blessed and may they be requited a thousandfold by Christ.

[159]

---

## 56.

### *Concerning the episcopate of Lord Yovhanne's and his advice.*

After the death of Lord Grigor, bishop of Siwnik', they elected [as successor] Yovhanne's, a fortunate man, glorified by God. I believe that he derived from the same line as Lord Sargis, *kat'oghikos* of the Armenians. The pious and devout Vasak, king of the land of Siwnik' and Baghk', sent him with nobles and very grand gifts to Ani, to the blessed patriarch of the Armenians, Lord Sargis, for ordination as bishop of Siwnik'. He also looked to [the *kat'oghikos*] again to grant [to the episcopacy of Siwnik'] the rank of metropolitanate and the attendant honors of having a cross led before him [g46], a staff, and a throne—[perquisites] which had been removed by Lord Anania because of the scandal of Yakob. King Gagik became the son-in-law of King Vasak, Queen Katramide' being [Vasak's] daughter who built the heavenly pavillion at the blessed cathedral. King [Vasak] also sent them regal gifts and informed them in writing about the request [he had] from the *kat'oghikos*. Therefore Gagik and the blessed Queen Katramide' solicitously had the patriarch ordain Lord Yovhanne's as metropolitan of Siwnik' in magnificent splendor. The patriarch gave him Siwnik's Cross, golden veil, costly staff, and venerable throne, which had been kept in a chamber of the sanctuary of the patriarch's residence. And they renewed the degree and great honor of the Apostolic throne of Siwnik' as it previously had been.

Then they sent him to his [ecclesiastical] throne with enormous wealth and in great glory. [Lord Yovhanne's] also received many gifts from the king and queen as well as a fragment of the wood of salvation [the Cross] encased in gold. This had been sent to them by the autocrat emperor of the Byzantines, Basil Porphyrogennetus [Basil II, Bulgaroctonus, 960-963, 963-976]. [The fragment of the Cross] had on it a spot which was dyed with the blood of Jesus. [This relic] had astounding powers and [g47] caused very great miracles. And thus did [Lord Yovhanne's] return to his own throne in Siwnik' loaded down with countless gifts. King Vasak came out before him with a multitude of princes, and received [Lord Yovhanne's] with great splendor. And great was the joy among them. The blessed metropolitan, with abundant doctrine and sweet words, illuminated and comforted his believing flock. Thereafter he began to make that House richer and more glorious than before. They returned to it all the ravished legacies. For the [lords of] Mak'enots'ats' had usurped Geghak'uni, and someone [had expropriated] Vayots' Dzor and sat [there] as bishop. Someone else [had expropriated] the district of Ernjak and sat as bishop in Ernjak monastery. The [lords of the] Goght'nats'ik' [had expropriated] Botedzor, Bust, and Orduat. Similarly, the princes had distributed the countryside among their nobles (*azats*). Lord Sargis [*Kat'oghikos* Sargis I Sevants'i, 992-1019] wrote a circulating letter bound by frightful anathemas against anyone brazenly daring to reject this decree [to return property]. Rather, all of them returned [the lands] as property of the [ecclesiastical] throne, the blessed Cross, and Lord Yovhanne's. [Lord Yovhanne's] got them back and made them submit to him. Moreover, he rejected and persecuted those foreign shepherds who had turned into wolves.

**[160]** [Yovhanne's] was supported in this by the bare power of the pious [g48] King Vasak in returning the ravished spiritual gifts, the village of Ts'awghun and Godevank' and all the diocese of his lordship. He wrote in his own hand a letter with the following contents:

"In the name of God, these are the commands of [myself], King Vasak, which I wrote in the year 468 of the Armenian Era [A.D. 1019]. And I give [the bequests] to my representative of God, Lord Yovhanne's, who, like the great John the Baptist, was chosen by God from the womb. He graced us with visitations and illuminated everyone to the point that all of us in his diocese were inspired by all his labors. Thus we are returning the village of Ts'awghun and Godevan to the blessed city of Tat'ev. Earlier we had taken [these properties] back because of the confusion and disruption of the patriarchate. But now we confirm [their ownership] once again. And along with these [properties] we have returned [properties] from all twelve jurisdictions [of Siwnik'], namely, Vayots' Dzor, Geghak'uni, P'orak, Hamband, Jugha, and Ernjak.

From now till eternity, no one has the command of Almighty God and all the saints to oppose this [ecclesiastical] throne or to attempt to ravish these places and districts. Should people be so bold as to try this, may they be cursed body and soul by God and by the blessed patriarchs. We wrote this and stamped it [g49] with our signet ring and royal command by the will of God.

I, Prince Smbat, the nephew (sister's son) of our God-crowned king, am a witness that [the king's] commands may not be transgressed.

And I, Grigor, son of Ashot, Prince of Princes, am a witness to these orders of my maternal uncle, the God-protected king. May God favor the blessed see."

**[161]** King Vasak also gave the village of Gruak, and he wrote the deed as follows:

"By the will of God I, Vasak, son of King Smbat reconfirm that the village of Gruak—which the lords previously had given to the Holy Sign—is given with all its borders to Tat'ev, through the agency of the God-honored bishop of Siwnik', Lord Yovhanne's. [It shall be] free of all duties (*ch'ar*) and taxes, so that they perform memorials for those who have gone before, and for us. Now should anyone attempt to confound this [arrangement], may [that person] be cursed by Almighty God and

by all the saints and inherit the portion of Cain. And should sovereignty pass to a Tachik and should he attempt to ravish [the property], may he be rejected by God and by his prophet and may he receive a thousand thousand curses (*nalat'*). [Done] in the year 465 [of the Armenian Era = A.D. 1016]. [May it be] confirmed by the will of God."

Seeing this, some of the princes were filled with the goodly desire to emulate it. And they gave the village of Shor'ot' to Tat'ev, writing a deed with the following provisions:

"In the name of God we, the sons of Sakr'i, Xarbi, Artawaz [g50], and Sup'an, have chosen to give the village of Shor'ot' as the price of our father's blood to the blessed metropolitanate of Tat'ev through the agency of Lord Yovhanne's, bishop of Siwnik', during the reign of our King Vasak, for the sake of our father's soul. We have designated as a memorial for ourselves the [feast-]day of Saint Sargis and the celebration of mass in all churches of the monastery in memory of Sakr'i. [Done] in 475 of the Armenian Era [A.D. 1026]. Now should anyone thwart or try to obstruct this gift, may [that person] be rejected by God Almighty and be cursed by the blessed Apostles and prophets, the 318 patriarchs and all the saints. Amen.

I, King Vasak, confirmed this with my own hand and put my royal stamp [on the document].

And I, Bishop Yovhanne's, have confirmed this [document] which was written by my own hand and I have stamped it with my customary signet ring. Let no one dare to overturn this deed. Should a Tachik become sovereign and ravish this, may [such a person] be rejected by God and by their prophet, be anathematized by all the saints, and be cursed 100,000 times [g51]."

---

[162]

## 57.

### ***Encyclical of Lord Sargis, kat'oghikos of the Armenians, to the entire diocese of Siwnik'.***

By the grace of Almighty God the Father, by the mercy of His Only-Begotten Son, and by the providence of the liberating Holy Spirit, this document of command and blessing was written by me, Lord Sargis, the lowly servant of God. [I am,] through His mercy, *kat'oghikos* of all Armenians and have written this encyclical to you of the preeminent and God-exalted House of Siwnik', to the God-crowned King Vasak, to the God-protected Princes Sevada and Ashot, to the other nobles (*azats*) and to the general population spread throughout the twelve ecclesiastical jurisdictions [of Siwnik']. May blessing and protection be yours from the holy throne of Saint Gregory, from the saints, dyed with the blood of God and gathered before God, and from us. May you be secure from all accidents and disasters.

Know, O my spiritual sons, that through various developments [during the tenures of] Lord T'e'odoros and Lord Anania who preceded us as *kat'oghikoi*, the see of Siwnik' which is of Apostolic origin, became impeded, and [its authority] became split and torn apart [g52]. On the emergence of the God-chosen Yovhanne's, we ordained him metropolitan of Siwnik', the same as the first occupants of this throne. Moreover, we reconfirmed jurisdiction over the twelve ecclesiastical dispensations as belonging to the preeminent see of the House of Sisakan at Tat'ev under your God-chosen bishop and metropolitan, the blessed and favored Lord Yovhanne's. We are restoring to him the previous honors which were theirs, the [special] Cross and throne [and staff]. Nor was this done merely with the authority vested in us. Rather, he brought to us some wonderful letters and the provisions of grants handwritten by the previous patriarchs of the Armenians, beginning with Saint Gregory, his sons, and grandsons—letters which, until the time of Saint Sahak, were written in Greek (or, in Greek characters)—each stamped with the leaden seal of his ring. After

[St. Sahak] they were written in Armenian characters until the time of Anania. [Such documents continued] until our tenure, excepting only [during the tenure of] Anania.

**[163]** Now [Anania] wrote [a document] regarding Bishop Vahan but not in the manner of the others. There were a total of 55 such encyclical letters, each with a patriarch's seal. [All of them contained] lengthy statements and terrible anathemas to prevent anyone from daring to reduce what the document had given and/or to reduce or remove the honor and rank [g53] so accorded. Consequently, we, too, fearing [disobedience to] the command of such Apostolic Fathers and respecting the antiquity and longevity of the see of Siwnik', are returning all the borders of their diocese. Again we are reestablishing the honors given to them: the [special] Cross, throne, and staff. Here are the districts of the dioceses of their flock: Siwnik', Baghk', Araweats' *tun*, Oruat, Ark'ulik', Vanand, Ernjak, Naxijevan, Jugha up to where the Erasx River intersects it, Chahuk, Vayots' Dzor with Xach'eroxor', Geghak'uni with Koghabak, Erishat, Jaghats'a Dzor, and all of P'orak, which caused much opposition. And the *kat'oghikos* strengthened these [provisions] with very great anathemas.

Also included were R'mbadzor at the Aghuan border, the district of Tsar, Aghahe'ch, which is intersected by the Aghun River as far as the K'aravaz bridge, and the district of Haband, and Botidzor in Ernjak which the residents of Goght'n had taken, as well as Vanand and all of Goght'n. Although they had their own bishop for a few places, nonetheless, he was subject to Siwnik'. And now, you districts of Siwnik', be obedient to the see of Siwnik' in all sincerity and accept [g54] as your bishop Lord Yovhanne's, who I am sending to you as an angel of God and a man resembling the Apostles. Serve him in all submission as [you serve] God. Now should anyone choose to oppose that see and/or be the cause of obstructing the terms set by the patriarch regarding honor and legacies to the diocese and to the Church, may such a one inherit the terrible and unspeakable curses set forth by the previous blessed patriarchs, and doubled by ourself. But may those who implement this order be blessed by Almighty God, the blessed patriarchs, ourself, and the throne of Saint Gregory. This order was written by our own hand in the year 455 of the Armenian Era [A.D. 1006]. For additional confirmation, we have stamped it with our customary signet ring to the glory of God, Who is blessed for all eternity. Amen.

**[164]**

---

## 58.

### ***The coming of the Ishmaelites and the destruction of churches and the burning of the monastery at Tat'ev. The rebuilding of the churches and monasteries by Lord Yovhanne's.***

This most fortunate bishop adorned the bishop's palace (*episkoposaran*) at Tat'ev, the great monastery of the preeminent see of Siwnik' [g55], with diverse embellishments, very grand utensils, and beautiful divine orders. He filled it with a multitude of clerics, invincible philosophers, matchless musicians, learned *vardapets*, God-clad hermits, and innumerable craftsmen. Indeed, one could behold that House as a heavily populated metropolis with a multitude of buildings and a crowd of some thousand men who raised prayers to God day and night. It was as though a fiery pillar existed there between heaven and earth. Through these payers for 50 years the land of Sisakan was free from the raids of enemies and was protected from On High from all crises, punishments, and disasters.

However, the evil one was disturbed by this and could not bear to see it. Rather, [Satan] entered the hearts of the Ishmaelite military commanders who were in Movkan and Talish, in Ahr and Ardabil (Artawe'l) and in Atrpatakan. [Satan] aroused them to move [against Tat'ev] because of the renown of this illustrious House. They notified each other and assembled many troops and planned to come against the monastery secretly to

loot its immense wealth, that is, the church's vessels and holy things. They arose, silently crossed the Arax [g56] and suddenly attacked the holy convent and, like a raging fire, swept through it. Those who could, hid themselves in the ravine and escaped by flight. Bishop Lord Yovhanne's, as it happened, was not there at the time. But the rest were all put to the sword, while the church, which was in the name of Saint Gregory, [the marauders] filled with wood and set ablaze, destroying the beautiful structure, which they pulled apart. They also wanted to destroy the marvellous column which had been erected at the great church two years earlier by the great Lord Yovhanne's. However, by some miracle, they did not dare to touch it. This was also true for the large church. Nonetheless, they burned down and wrecked all the [other] structures at the monastery—the workshops, dining hall, and all other buildings of the clerics and other residents. Whatever they found, they took as booty and then departed for wherever they had come from.

**[165]** Now when the bishop heard about this and came to the site and observed the immense destruction and disaster, he mourned and wept bitterly. What made it especially unbearable and the cause of inconsolable grief, was the destruction of the church. By his order, the bodies of the victims of the massacre were censed and honored and prepared after the manner of martyrs, and laid to rest. Then all the nobles arrived there [g57], including the district chiefs (*gawar'akalk'*) of the land of Sisakan, Lord Smbat and Lord Grigor. With many condolences they comforted the bishop and encouraged and pressed him to build that House again, they themselves helping with everything necessary. And the venerable bishop in his prudence and wisdom, girded his loins, like a man, and set to work rebuilding the ruined temple of Saint Gregory, which had been built earlier by Prince P'ilippe'. He erected a structure of beautiful proportions and placed in it an incomparable spiritual treasure, the revered and beatific relics of Saint Gregory: a side of his skull and one arm were placed to the right of the main arcade at the top of a pillar, well wrapped and not visible to human eyes. After the passage of some time we, the lowly one [the author] found this in the same spot, stamped with a leaden seal.

[Yovhanne's] also erected an arch over the main entrance to the monastery which looks to the west, and, on it, two altars of cut and dressed rock in the name of Saint Karapet [John the Baptist]. He also constructed—more beautifully than before—all the common dwellings and rooms for clerics, which the foreigners had burned and demolished. Subsequently, in the southern yard of the church, he also constructed porticoes of dressed stone and very suitable halls for the convenience of the brotherhood. Then he assembled the dispersed [g58] brothers and made [things] more glorious than before. He also built an altar over the small door by which one enters the church portico. A prince by the name of Dlen, son of Xaghbak, gave from his patrimonial inheritance the village of Xot and the great vineyard of Xotaget and, in Vzhani, Tsaghkik, which is a place of many fields. [These properties] were given for [Prince Dlen's] soul to Lord Yovhanne's and to the Holy Cross. He himself wrote the deed and stipulated [as a provision] that every year five masses be conducted on the feast of Elijah, on a Saturday. Furthermore, with great and terrible anathemas, he excluded anyone from ravishing that spiritual gift to the blessed church. And Lord Yovhanne's authenticated the deed with his seal.

"Now let no one dare to oppose this or efface his memorial. Otherwise, may such a person be cursed by God and by the blessed patriarchs. [Done] in 495 of the Armenian Era [A.D. 1046]."

**[166]** In addition, the fortunate Lord Yovhanne's had fashioned a magnificent and astonishing blessed cross made entirely of gold on which was affixed [a fragment of the True Cross] showing a drop of divine red blood, which illuminated the land of Sisakan like the sun. Its sparkling rays astounded all viewers. Then he adorned it with great artistry using 24 precious gems interspersed with beautiful rows of pearls [g59] and placed on it the blessed life-giving Wood which had received the One God, the Divine Word, which had been nailed to it. The blood of Jesus Christ was visible to viewers. Powers and awe-inspiring miracles emanated from it. This [fragment] itself was in the shape of a cross and had been placed in a container made of transparent white crystal surrounded by gems, through which the life-giving Holy Cross could be seen.

[Lord Yovhanne's] had engraved these dedicatory words on the back on one side:

"Lord Yovhanne's, bishop of Siwnik', in the year 466 [of the Armenian Era, (A.D. 1027)] had this Holy Cross fashioned and erected it in the House of Sisakan to inspire hope in the believers and salvation for all in our dioceses."

And thus, by such solemn words and noteworthy deeds did this wonderful and tireless bishop, Lord Yovhanne's, illuminate that House. In the 507 [A.E. (A.D. 1058)], after 50 years in his metropolitanate, [Yovhanne's] went to his Summoner in the premier city of Upper Jerusalem, where the saints are gathered and where the mayor is Christ. In exchange for his great works, efforts, and austerities, he received payment a thousand fold and ten thousand fold. And now, you patriarchs who are pleasing to God and [you] blessed brethren who succeed [him] on the holy throne and are the inheritors of this House [g60]: you must without opposition, through assiduous prayers and life-giving communion, celebrate the memory of this holy father, so worthy of commemoration. With his prayers and supplications and those of all the blessed patriarchs, and by your prayers and mine, may we be saved from all dangers, spiritual and physical, and may this blessed House and all in its diocese remain steadfast. May all the saints and loved ones of God say "Amen" to this.

---

[167]

## 59.

### *Regarding the Kings of Siwnik'.*

The first to rule as king in our land of Sisakan was the valiant, brave, mighty, and pious King Smbat, son of Sahak, brother of Smbat, who were sons of the pious Ashot, brother of the great Vasak, who was called Ishxanik. [Vasak-Ishxanik and Ashot] were sons of the venerable P'ilippe', brother of Sahak, who was slain in Dvin fighting against the emir Hul. The brothers P'ilippe' and Sahak were sons of the great patriarch of Siwnik', Vasak. Now following Smbat, there ruled as king his son, Vasak, a sweet and pious man, who was successful in everything. [Vasak] gave his sister [as a wife] to Ashot, who was of the same Sisakan clan. [Ashot] was Prince of Princes of this entire kingdom [g61]. He had two sons, Smbat and Grigor. Then King Vasak died and was buried along with his father, Smbat. He had no heir for his realm. Therefore they enthroned Ashot's son, Smbat, and set in his father's place his brother, Grigor, as Prince of Princes of the land of Sisakan. Smbat, though mild and agreeable, was a terror to all the surrounding peoples. He reigned for some years and then died and was buried by the door of the church at Yovhannuvank'. Then his brother, Grigor, ruled his realm. These two [rulers] were sons of the great Ashot and were styled senior Ashoteans.

Now Grigor took as his wife the most blessed, pious and devout Shahanduxt, from the House of the Aghuans. She was the daughter of the great Sevada, who was of their royal line. But they were childless, and their kingdom might have remained without an heir. And so they conferred together with the princes and had sent to them from Aghuania, Senek'erim, the brother of Queen Shahahduxt. He was still a lad, very handsome, with a strong constitution, brilliant and wise and also God-fearing. [Grigor] made [Senek'erim] heir to their kingdom. After reigning for some years, [Grigor] also died.

In this period there increased and strengthened the [g62] lordship of the Tachiks and the entire land had been conquered and placed under taxation to them. Therefore, many districts had been taken from the hands of their native rulers in our land of Sisakan. Sitting on the throne of the Sultanate was Malik-Shah, a benevolent and peace-loving man who exalted Senek'erim in the honor of kingship. [Senek'erim] reigned as king in the House of Baghk', with noteworthy glory enlarging all the borders of his lordship. He ruled the kingdom for many years, leading a mild and peaceful life until the death of Sultan Malik, who died in 541 [of the Armenian Era (A.D. 1092)]. Then that peace began to crumble and all the construction of our land became corrupted, as I shall relate in its proper place.

**[168]** Now Senek'erim had three sons, Grigor, Smbat, and Sevada, plus one daughter. Here is how Senek'erim died. After Malik-Shah, everyone looked about, raised his head, and aspired to self-rule and, fighting each other with the forces they had, ravaged and wrecked the country, [including] taking captives.

Because of this [disorder], the accursed Ishmaelites were attracted to the beautiful and secure kingdom of Baghk', which they viewed as a great obstacle to themselves. And so the emir of Partaw, R'an, and Gandzak arose [g63] with many troops and came to battle against Senek'erim. With him was the prince of Shirak, Grigor Apirat. Senek'erim learned about this and strengthened all the defences of the impregnable fortresses of the land. Now when the accursed emir came and saw that [military] conquest was not humanly possible, he sent to King Senek'erim [as an envoy] the prince of Ani, Grigor, who happened to be with him. [The emir] said [to Grigor]: "Convince him through an oath to come to me and we will make mutual friendship. And then I will release him with very grand presents. If you fail to convince him, I will behead you." Thus did that Grigor embark on that evil journey. He entered Senek'erim's presence and, with a great oath, convinced him to go to the emir. They went together.

When that poisonous beast [the emir] saw him, he broke his oath, attacked him with a roar, and killed the king. Then he departed for his own land. And thus was extinguished this torch of the Christians which had remained in the fortresses of Baghk'. Then the grandees and [Senek'erim's] sons came and, after great lamentation, took [his body] to the blessed convent of Vahannuvank' and buried it in a tomb alongside the other kings. After [Senek'erim] his son, Grigor, held his lordship, but he reigned reduced and in weakness. However, this [g64] Senek'erim and his sister, Shahanduxt, did many good deeds and constructed noteworthy buildings at Yovhannuvank'. Moreover, they gave many gifts and legacies to the blessed metropolitan see at Tat'ev, which I shall now set forth.

---

**[169]**

## 60.

### ***Regarding Lord Grigor, bishop of Siwnik', who reigned after Lord Yovhanne's, and his works.***

When the venerable Lord Yovhanne's, metropolitan of Siwnik' died, the God-crowned King Smbat selected a worthy man named Grigor, acclaimed by everyone, adorned with all virtues and full of knowledge, and sent him to the *kat'oghikos* of the Armenians in Ani to have him ordained as bishop of Siwnik'. Upon his return [to Siwnik', Grigor], by his outstanding virtue and physical example, served as a perfect model [for others]. He reigned for a long period, 58 years. [Bishop Grigor] built marvellous structures at the bishops' palace of Tat'ev: erecting arches over the eastern entrance to the monastery; a blessedly-constructed church nearby in the name of the holy Mother of God, adding to it a splendid dome [g65]. From its elevation, [this church] seemed to be looking upon the monastery. He built porticoes on all four sides of it. By the front side he built a structure with lofty columns containing rooms which were pleasant resting places. [Grigor] himself wrote a memorial inscription on the church and stipulated that every year without fail a quarantine [of masses] should be offered in his memory.

[Bishop Grigor] also received Bolorak'ar, a portion of Norik', from Xaghbak's son, Dlen, and reinforced [ownership of] it with anathemas [written] on the holy church. Through his efforts, the venerable and blessed Queen Shahanduxt and her brother, the pious King Senek'erim, gave as a gift Arit, which was a hamlet bordering on the holy, great see of Tat'ev. The king himself wrote the provisions of the deed with terrible anathemas, having this content:

"By the will of the mighty and able Jesus, I, Senek'erim, king of the Armenians, [ruling] in Sisakan and the land of Baghk', having read the documents of confirmation written by the first patriarchs and princes, wanted to renew [the provisions] and return [properties to the church]. I have written this deed prompted by my willing heart and at the order of my pious and Christ-clothed sisters, Queen Shahanduxt and the blessed virgin Kata [g66]. [They] forsook the earthly glories of this world to follow the blessed voice of Christ, practising virtuous asceticism. I am giving Arit with all its surrounding borders—including land, water, fields and everything else belonging to it—to the blessed churches, to [the church of] the Holy Apostles and [to the church of] Saint Gregor at Tat'ev, the monastic complex and seat of the patriarchs, during the pontificate of Lord Grigor, bishop of Siwnik' and their adopted son, Lord Step'annos. Since this was my own property and no one else's, I am giving it unconditionally, with no disputes, without depriving or ravishing or saddening anyone. And I am giving it to the blessed congregation of Tat'ev, for the salvation of my soul and to atone for my own sins and those of my genuine sisters and the sons of my life and their salvation, for Grigor, Smbat, and Sevada, and for their mother and sister. I also have designated a quarantine to be offered annually in the holy churches during Lent: 20 days for King Grigor, son of Ashot and 20 days for my mother Sop'i during my lifetime. After my death it will be 20 days for my sister, Shahanduxt, and 20 days for myself, Senek'erim.

**[170]** Now should anyone arise in opposition [to these provisions] or [g67] brazenly think to thwart, ravish, slander, or defame our bequest to these holy churches, may such a one not find mercy from God in this world or in the next. Rather, may the curses [mentioned] for the ravishers be visited upon [such a one], the sins of the sinful, the curses for evildoers, such as Cain, Judas, Arius, the followers of Macedonius, denier of the Holy Spirit, of the diophysite Nestor, of the Roman Leo and other [heretics] like them. May those who adhere [to the provisions set forth here] be blessed by Almighty God and all the saints.

I, Senek'erim, son of Sevada, wrote this with my own hand, by the will of God.

I, Shahanduxt, am a witness to and confirm the act and deed of my brother, Senek'erim, regarding what has been given to [the church of] the Holy Apostles at Tat'ev. May God grace the blessed churches. May whoever thinks to obstruct [this bequest] be heir to the curses written here. Blessed be those who uphold [these provisions].

I, Grigor, son of Senek'erim, and my brothers are witnesses to this donation which is true and valid and to these directives. [Done] in the year 534 [of the Armenian Era (A.D. 1085)] by the will of the merciful and benevolent God the Father, His annointed [son] Jesus, the supreme Word, and the life-giving Holy Spirit.

I, Grigor, the humble servant of Christ, by His mercy bishop of Siwnik', and my [adopted] son [g68], Step'annos, have received these donations from King Senek'erim who was anointed and crowned by God, and we have received the spiritual gifts which they have made in this secure and unbreakable deed, namely, [bequests] to the monastic complex of Tat'ev, to [the church of] Saint Gregory and to the Holy Cross, acquired at the price of their own blood, districts in the state of Tsghuk, and the hamlet of Arit. I have designated that annually, without fail, memorial [masses] should be offered in the blessed churches during their lives, and after they pass to Christ, as they have been written.

Now [regarding failure to honor these provisions]: should we or one of our successors as patriarch on this holy throne, or other monastic leaders of the House, be they senior priests or other church leaders, neglect the prescribed quarantine for whatever reason, even for a single day—not to mention further obstruction—may they be cursed by Christ God and may their names be expunged from the *Book of Life*. May they not be remembered before Christ's blessed altar of sacrifice and may they not

be forgiven by the righteous judge at the incorruptible tribunal. Should anyone attempt to thwart the deed and spiritual donation of this God-crowned king and ravish the Holy Apostles and the Holy Cross, be they grandees or small folk, be they seniors or [g69] *azats*, foreigners, or known people—for whatever reason—should they rise in opposition or seek a pretext for plunder and spoliation or actually ravish [the properties], may that person be cursed by the same mouth that cursed the serpent, may painful curses come upon him, and may blessings turn to curses, may his soul be cursed by all the orders [of beings], celestial and terrestrial, who love the Holy Trinity, may he not enjoy his property and inheritance, may his current life end miserably and when he dies may the earth not accept him. But may God and all His saints bless those who uphold [the provisions]."

[171] Seeing this, the pious and great Prince Hasan, son of Grigor, one of Senek'erim's *azats*, also gave to these holy churches the village of Norashinik and Dzer'ativank' in the district of Kavsakan, which properties in earlier times had been given as inheritance to the blessed church at Tat'ev. Norashinik was given by Prince Hrahat through the agency of Lord Dawit', while Dzer'ativank' had been given in the days of the metropolitan Yakob. [Prince Hasan] thus restored them into the hands of Lord Grigor, and in the presence of the king, wrote the deed having this content:

"In the name of God, this [deed] is written by me, Hasan, son of Grigor [g70]. Today, when God gave me success, I took my fortress of Mshtak'axt'e'nits' and with my blood freed from Emir P'atlun the district of Kavsakan. And I returned Norashenik and Dzer'ativank' to Surb Nshan of Tat'ev. [I did this] by order of my king, Senek'erim, in the time of the bishop of Siwnik', the God-honored and spiritual Lord Grigor, and, in the presence of all the *azats* and witnessed by everyone, I gave [these properties] free of all royal taxes. Hereafter, no one has any sort of claim, great or small on these small villages. Let no one dare to oppose [this bequest], now or until eternity, not one of our own folk or foreigners, senior folk or officials. Should anyone dare, may anathemas and curses, sins, heresies of all the evil doers fall upon him, and may he not enjoy his own life. May he be judged by the Holy Trinity. May the upholder [of these provisions] be blessed.

Should a Tachik acquire seniority and think to ravish [the properties] may he be cursed by his own faith, abandoned and dishonored by his prophet and may 1,000 curses (*nalat'*) remain upon him."

I, King Senek'erim, have confirmed with my hand this deed of Hasan's, that these villages, which he freed with his own blood from the Tachiks [g71], are given to Tat'ev at my command. I and my sons and *azats* am a witness that as long as these churches are standing, let no one dare or scheme to snatch these gifts. I myself am donating along with this, Xashtatatap'. Now should anyone oppose this, may he inherit the aforementioned curses.

I, R'ahib, am a witness to these acts, which no one should dare to oppose. [Done] in 535 of the Armenian Era [A.D. 1086].

[172] Following this, the king again came to the blessed congregation, to the spiritual Lord Grigor, to see and to pray. Now the villages of Harzhik', Berdkanerechi, and Ts'uraget had been ravished from the blessed church and were held by Senek'erim's *azats*, the great Prince Mahewan and another *azat*, Ge'org. Consequently, the bishop informed the king about this deprivation of the church, and placed before him old documents with unbreakable provisions, which showed [the properties] as having been given [to the church] by the first kings. When [the king] read them, he was horrified by the severe anathemas they contained [against alienation]. Three times it had been confirmed that these small villages [were given] to the holy see: first by Smbat, king of the Armenians and by Ashot, the great prince of Siwnik, and Berdkanerech'i had been purchased by Lord Dawit; second, by Smbat, king of Siwnik', son of Sahak, by means of [g72] Lord Vahan of Baghk' and his son, Vasak; and third, a certain Prince Hasan, son of Kora K'urd, who was one of the *azats* of Prince Vasak, who was the son of the great crown prince of Siwnik', Smbat, Prince of Princes of Armenia and

Iberia/Georgia. [Prince Hasan] had purchased the village of Harzhik' from his own patrimony and by order of the great Vasak and his sons, Smbat and Gagik, had given this village free of all taxes to the monastery of Tat'ev. They had written a deed with very great provisions and had established in his memory that every year a quarantine be offered on the feast of Epiphany.

Behold, when the pious King Senek'erim had read and familiarized himself with all this, out of religious dread, he ordered his princes to return [the properties]. He and his princes wrote a deed for all eternity with unbreakable provisions, with this content:

"I, King Senek'erim, son of Sevada, wrote this. Until now, God deigned not to remember me with anger and in His mercy pitied me and again reestablished me to the authority of my patrimonial lordship, which had been displaced by the Ishmaelites. Having read the earlier documents and [seeing] the spoliation of legacies [given to] the holy church and the divine see of Siwnik', I have returned them to the monastic complex of Tat'ev. And once again I have confirmed with my own hand [g73] as inviolable patrimony belonging to it, Harzhik', Berdkanerech'i, and Ts'uraget. This is the fourth such reconfirmation. The aforementioned [properties] I have entrusted to our God-appointed blessed patriarch Lord Grigor. From here to eternity, no one can confound, ravish, or be the cause of thwarting [the bequests] which I have written and confirmed with provisions [as belonging to] the [church of] the Holy Apostles. Should anyone be so bold as to plan this, may he be cursed by God and the blessed Apostles, and share [the fate of] Judas and Arius, and be judged with satan. May he not enjoy his life. Should rule pass to a Tachik and should he think to undermine, destroy, or disobey [these provisions], may he be cursed by God, creator of Heaven and Earth, by all His chosen saints, and by the prophet whom they call *p'eghambar*. May he be forsaken by his legislator, Muhammad, and cursed from generation to generation. This was written in 540 of the Armenian Era [A.D. 1091].

**[173]** In the name of God we also, Mahewan and Ge'org, by order of our God-kept King Senek'erim, are returning Harzhik', Berdkanerech'i, and Ts'uraget to [the church of] the Holy Apostles at Tat'ev, [properties] which had been sheared off during a time of devastation and misery and are now in our hands. No one, neither from our own [folk] or anyone else has authority over or claim to [g74] these villages, not [for collecting] the *ch'ar* [tax], not for a Tachik tax, not for a fortress tax (*berdach'ari*), not for quartering troops (*gundgahi*) or anything else. Rather, only the Holy Cross and the spiritual lord have authority here. Should anyone dare [to do these things], may he inherit the aforementioned curses.

I, R'ahiba, am a witness to my king's sincere commands and confirmation. Let no one dare to become the cause of its obstruction. Rather, by the will of God, may [the bequest] remain firm."

In addition, they gave many other legacies to the blessed congregation which we regard as superfluous to record here. A certain Abusahl, lord of Meghri fortress, gave a large vineyard in Berdawageans in Meghri valley in the year 532 [A.D. 1083]. They also gave a village in Barkushat, and the village of Xoghvan in Vanandadzor. Prince Ashot gave Ambrawak'ar to Surb Nshan and they wrote the deed as follows:

"In the name of God, I, Prince Ashot, son of Karapin, give my patrimonial inheritance of Ambrawak'ar to Surb Nshan at Tat'ev through the agency of Lord Grigor, bishop of Siwnik', by order of the God-crowned King Senek'erim. They have designated for us [observance of] an inviolable [provision, a] mass on the day of the Ascension of the Lord. No one has authority to obstruct this, either by opposition or by placing the *ch'ar* [tax] and [other] taxes on it. Should someone attempt this, may he be cursed by the Holy Trinity and all the saints, and may he [g75] inherit Judas' fate. Should a Tachik achieve seniority [here] and try to alienate [the properties], may he be cursed 1,000 times and rejected by his faith. [Done] in 538 of the Armenian Era [A.D. 1089]. May God favor this.

I, King Senek'erim, and my sons, Grigor and Smbat, confirm this [deed].

There also were many other donations. May the Lord in His generosity deign to reward [the donors] ten thousandfold and give them permanent delight and joy without end.

[174]

---

## 61.

### ***The cause of the destruction of Kapan and the capture of fortresses. The complete ruination of the kingdom of Baghk', and the demise of the clan of Sisakan.***

In 552 of the Armenian Era [A.D. 1103] began the devastation of the district of Kapan and the secure land of Baghk', and the end of the lordship of its kings and princes. We learned about this in a letter by Lord Step'annos, bishop of Siwnik', which he wrote in the lovely city of Ani at the request of the blessed priest Mxit'ar. [Mxit'ar] was a senior priest in the city and sacristan of the holy cathedral. The cause of the great destruction was as follows. King Senek'erim had gone [g76] to see Sultan Malik-Shah in Aspahan, the capital city of the Persians. After meeting him, [Senek'erim] was exalted by him with the greatest glory and seated at the head of the attendees. Now it happened that the sultan had a dearly loved servant named Ch'ort'man who offered a cup before him [as a steward]. During the meal [Ch'ort'man] greatly plied the king with wine and got him to promise many gifts without reflection. Eventually, [Senek'erim] promised to give his own daughter to Ch'ort'man. Then, according to their custom, [Ch'ort'man] made a knot on Senek'erim's belt as a sign of that [promised] word. And [Ch'ort'man] took it and showed it to the sultan. Then he cunningly kept in his heart these words which had been uttered in jest, to await an opportunity.

Now when [Ch'ort'man] had achieved honor and the rank of prince, he demanded from Senek'erim the promised girl. Senek'erim responded with rough words, insulting [him] and ridiculing his request. As soon as Ch'ort'man understood the king's will, that the thing was impossible, he began to wreck and ruin [Senek'erim's] entire principality with bitter persecutions and diverse harassments. In the year 525 [A.D. 1076] the districts of Kapan were in a flourishing condition and the monasteries gleamed with worship and illumination. In 541 [A.D. 1092] when Sultan Malik-Shah died, for a full year [g77] the country was in turmoil. However, this began to calm down, during the seven-year lordship of Malik-Shah's son, Barkiyaruq (Be'ki-Arux). Then in the year 548 [A.D. 1099] when Barkiyaruq died, once again the disturbances broke out with intensity. One day, at the completion of the eleventh jubilee plus two years, that is, in the year 552 [A.D. 1103], when its residents were not on guard, the Lord suddenly betrayed the impregnable city of Kapan. That accursed Ch'ort'man, because of his grudge, unexpectedly attacked the city. First, many soldiers skilled in rock-climbing and spelunking ascended the rock face of [one side of] the mountain, and descended on the city via a large ruined ravine, since that area had not been walled due to its inaccessibility for human entrance. They began the assault from the side of Jhtat'agh. Then they opened the city gates which face Xndoraglux. Thereafter, all the troops entered and generally killed everyone. But as for the [city's] citadel, they were unable to take it. Rather, they returned to their own place.

[175] Behold, this was the start of the destruction of the land and day by day [local] authority weakened and declined. This was the principality of Baghk' which contained 43 fortresses, 12 of them renowned; 48 monasteries; 1008 villages, and the capital city of Kapan. Again, in the year 553 [A.D. 1104] [g78] Orotn was taken. In 554 [A.D. 1105] Bghe'n was taken and Prince Xosrovik was taken captive, while a multitude of Christians were put to the sword, and the House of Baghk' was completely ruined. All the congregations of monastics became silent, [ceasing] their worship and a thick darkness enveloped our Armenian nation. All Christians and the churches of the Armenians were plunged into deep mourning. Only Baghaberd and Geghi,

Kak'awaberd, Shlorutn, Karchewan, Meghri, and Grham remained to Ashot's grandsons, King Grigor and Smbat. The latter were Ashot's grandsons and did not have [male] children. Grigor alone had a daughter named Kata. In 565 [A.D. 1116] the blessed Queen Shahahduxt, sister of King Senek'erim, died in great asceticism. In that same year there also died that venerable man of God, the blessed bishop Lord Grigor.

In the year 575 [A.D. 1126], Emir Haron came and destroyed the House of Kapan and the district of Arewik'. He took Kak'awaberd and Baghakak'ar, which was a monastery where many holy things were collected: crosses, relics of martyrs, gold, silver, and testaments which had been transferred there from the districts. All of them were taken captive. Now at the end of the year 600 [A.D. 1151] and the beginning of the following year, the resourceful nation of the Turks robbed Shlorut fortress, and, in 606 [A.D. 1157] [g79], they also robbed Meghri. In 609 [A.D. 1160] again God became angry with the land of Baghk' and the state of Siwnik'. The impregnable fortress of Baghaberd, which had been a place of refuge and asylum for everyone, was betrayed into the hands of an accursed and ravenous Ishmaelite, who had arrived with many troops. But at first, he was unable to accomplish anything. However, through deceptive words, he was able to trick the simple-minded Christian men of Ach'aghuats'. Through them he first took and ravaged Baghaberd, making a dreadful carnage. Because of the impregnability of the fortress, all the monasteries had collected their holy things there, the books and vessels of the Church. Beyond that, innumerable, incomparable, priceless relics and vessels used by the church of Tat'ev were also stored there from the magnificent and wealthy see—crosses, reliquaries made of gold and silver and adorned with precious stones and pearls, and innumerable Testaments. All of this, amounting to more than 10,000 items, was taken captive and scattered across the face of the earth. Alas and woe to us. Our affliction and ruin was worse than what Jerusalem had sustained at the hands of Nebuchadnezzar, for that city experienced a return and restoration by King Cyrus, whereas our misery was complete and eternal, with no return [g80].

**[176]** While the Lord betrayed us and on a daily basis wanted to destroy us, the other fortresses and strongholds voluntarily gave themselves to Atabeg Eltkuz. And the Tachiks ruled everywhere. A bitter and difficult time had arrived. Generally, the entire country and cultivated places were turned into ruins and became depopulated. However, Grigor, who ruled Baghk', brought Hasan Ger'ak'arets'i, a young lad from the princes of Xach'e'n, married his daughter, Kata, to him, and made him his heir. [Grigor] himself and his brother, Smbat, died in the year 615 [A.D. 1166] before the fortress had been taken. Before [the Saljuqs] wanted to take that fortress, Hasan set up guards and, taking his wife and family, arose from the fortress at night and left, going to his own district and home in Xach'e'n.

The remaining *azats* Jurj and Xosrovik died in their youth in Naxjawan and were buried at Chahuk. One of Jurj's brother's sons, who was named Mahewan, went as a fugitive to the city of Ani. Another prince, Hamtun, who was the son of Hasan, the great prince of Baghk' and the grandson of the senior Hamtun, went to Vayots'dzor to his glorious brother, Lord Yovhanne's, who lived in the retreat located in dense valleys and called Noravank', close to Hrashkaber, and became a cleric [g81] there, dying in the year 680 [A.D. 1231]. In this fashion the lordship of Siwnik' and Baghk' was ended, as were the clan of Sisakan and the *naxarardom* of Siwnik'. For of those who had lived earlier in the period of Smbat and Sahak, there were those who were without heirs, some died early, others were killed or taken captive. Only Grigor and Smbat were left, and they died as we described above.

---

**[177]**

***About the number of monasteries and congregations of churches which were in this land.***

First, Tat'ev, the head of all the monasteries and the source of the gift of grace in the House of Sisakan.

T'anahat monastery, a place practising great asceticism.

Siwni monastery, with its beautiful church, built in a new style with its domed altar resembling Heaven, which was built in the name of the blessed Illuminator by the great and pious Varazduxt, first lady of Siwnik', prior to [dating by] the Armenian Era. In front of this monastery, in a place where the view is lovely, the princes had built a royal castle and a palace as a dwelling for the princes. And, they say, every day they came [to church] at the hour of mass.

Kne'vank', about which they say [g82] that some young herdsmen who were leading their oxen there began to play. Cutting down a reed and fashioning a cross, they put it on a rock and, in jest, began to bow down to it and say "Whatever the priest says and reads, may that be fulfilled upon you. And may these three oxen be a sacrifice for you." What they were doing in jest, the Spirit of God descended and did likewise.

Now when evening arrived they began to depart and, though they tried to, they were unable to get those sacrificial offerings to move from the place. They went and notified their lords. The latter arrived and they also were unable to move them. [The lords] asked the lads what the causes were and the latter confessed the truth. And then they called priests who blessed that cross, sacrificed the oxen, and revered the place of the rushes. The princes of Siwnik' were notified and they came to look. And they ordered that a church be built there and designated for it a residence for clerics, but as for the place of reeds, they left it alone in a small ditch within the church. Until the place was ruined, oil flowed from that ditch and [the clerics] had no need for other oil. It served as fuel for their lamps. The church is still there as is the place of the reeds and the cross, which testify to the truth of this [account].

Vaghatni monastery, Noravank', and Erits'avank', which were offering service perpetually.

Shataneay monastery, which also did perpetual worship.

Gaghoreay vank' [g83], Vahanavank', Tandzap'arax, where the clerics wore sackcloth and were limited (or, under statute, *sahmanawork'*).

Luske' vank'

Lhe' vank'

**[178]**

K'rawnits' vank'

T'ade'i vank'

Kur'ap'adzoroy vank'

Tsitsar'noy vank'

Xach'atroy vank'

Dziwnaru vank'

In the Vayots'dzor area: Xotakerits' vank', which is called K'arkop'. They also observe perpetual worship.

Noravank', which subsequently became an episcopate.

Another Noravank'

Ts'aghats' k'ar, which was renowned as a place practising blessed virtues. Now in the year 490 (A.D. 1041), during the reign of Gagik, an abbot named Vardik built two magnificent churches on the gravesite of the first holy fathers, including the domed Saint Karapet and another church, triangular, and splendidly built.

Hermoni vank'

T'anate'i vank', where the relics of St. Step'annos are located.

Gndayi vank'.

In Gegham, the great retreat of Mak'eneats', Vanats' vank' and the other Vanevank', Shoghuagay vank'.

These are the monasteries, thirty in number, designated as the principal ones. Many of them now are empty and ruined buildings. Very few are flourishing today. There were many more, which I did not list [g84].

---

[179]

## 63.

### *The Bishops who were installed after Lord Grigor.*

Lord Grigor died after a tenure of 58 years. He was succeeded in his position by Lord Step'annos, for 27 years. In his day there occurred an earthquake at Gandzak in 587 [A.D. 1138] which shook the ground to its foundation and caused the entire dome of the great church at Tat'ev to collapse and fall upon [the church of] Saint Grigor and its portico, which stood before it and which also collapsed. In the year 592 [A.D. 1143] this blessed bishop died and a dreadful period ensued which the tongue cannot relate, when man and beast were completely wiped out and the entire land of Sisakan became deserted except for two or three men who remained, living in caves.

After Lord Step'annos the [ecclesiastical] throne was occupied by Lord Barsegh who reigned for a short while. He and the mule he was riding on accidentally fell into the Arax River near the village of Astapat. Divers entered [the river] and removed [his body] to the other shore. A great light was seen shining over the water. They took [the body] and buried it at Maghart'oy vank' which had been built by Saint Bartholomew. In the wall of that church were preserved [g85] three grains of the manna of the Israelites, as the historian Michael [the Syrian] confirms. And then the throne was devoid of occupants, and there were neither lords nor princes to concern themselves with the church or the remnants of the blessed flock and to deal with the question of a [spiritual] leader.

Now there was a senior priest in the hamlet of Meghri, who was named Grigor. He was a righteous and good man and the brother of Lord Barsegh. His blessed and pious wife, who was named Tsamam, exhorted him, saying: "O priest, the throne of Siwnik' is deserted. Hasten and become the chief priest so that our son also will be a chief priest's son. Remember that all of Saint Gregory's sons and grandsons [also] were married men." Receiving courage from these words, he went to Lord Grigoris, brother of Nerse's, *kat'oghikos* of the Armenians. There he was ordained a bishop and returned to the diocese of Siwnik'. Reigning there for 20 years, he died in the village of Xardzay in Vayots'dzor in the year 617 [A.D. 1168] where he was circulating about in his diocese. They took him and laid him to rest at the congregation of Noravank', alongside the venerable and blessed bishop Lord Yovhann's Kapanets'i. His young son, Step'annos, succeeded in his place. [Step'annos] was full of all graces and beloved and exalted in the eyes of those chiefs who then ruled: *Atabek*

Eltkuz, his son, Pahlavan [g86], and Qizil Arslan, and *Atabek* Bubak. They called him by the nickname Faxrelmseh, which translates "Beloved of Christ," and honored him with a written *tughra* and *farman* and *manshur*, which we call a *sigillum* (*sige'l*, "charter").

**[180]** In his day there lived T'amar and Lasha Go'rgi, the kings of the Georgians, and the great *amirspasalar* Zak'are' and his brother, *Atabek* Ivane', who also greatly loved and honored him. In Kayen they gave [to Step'annos] as a place for a retreat the renowned congregation of Haghartsin and the village of Abasadzor. [Step'annos] restored the ruined church of the Holy Apostles at Tat'ev and, through the abbot Yakob Chahkets'i, had a dome placed on it. In Haghbat he ordained as bishop Lord Grigoris, who was the sister's son of Zak'are' and Ivane'. After 46 years as bishop, [Step'annos] died in the village of Arp'a in Vayots'dzor. His body was taken and placed near his father's at the same Noravank' in the year 665 [A.D. 1216]. During his lifetime he had ordained as bishop Lord Sargis, the son of his sister, by order of his mother's brother, the *kat'oghikos* of the Aghuans. Following the death of Lord Step'annos, another of his nephews (father's brother's son) named Yovhanne's, went to Aghtamar and was ordained bishop there. He sat in Tat'ev. This Lord Sargis resided in [g87] Vayots'dzor in the retreat at Noravank', and the diocese was split. He took all of Vayots'dzor and left the rest to Lord Yovhanne's. Thereafter and subsequently that convent became an episcopate. For it was a home and refuge during the time of destruction of the House of Siwnik', a place of repose containing the tombs of many bishops. Later I will describe the nature of its building and the causes of its prosperity.

Having served for 38 years, Lord Yovhanne's died at the renowned monastery of Noravank' and was buried in the portico of the newly-built church in the year 700 [A.D. 1251]. His position was taken by his brother's son, Lord Hayrapet, and then by another relative, Lord Sagho'mo'n. Now it was Lord Sargis who founded the beautiful church at Noravank' by the order of, and with the aid of the great Prince of Princes Liparit, son of Elikum from the noble clan of the great Orbeleans from the land of Georgia in the year 665 [A.D. 1216]. Constructed in seven years with a marvellous design, [this church] in the name of the blessed Protomartyr has eight altars for mass. Then [Lord Sargis] himself, after great achievements and remarkable creations, went to Cilicia, to the pious king of the Armenians, Het'um, who received him with great honor [g88] and [gave him] a place of rest in the hamlet of Me'lich. After practising great asceticism there, he went to the holy city of Jerusalem, to the tomb of our God and Savior, Jesus Christ. Revering the places which had been trod upon by God, he found a priceless gift, the right hand of the Protomartyr Step'annos. He received this from the Franks, since at that time the Franks ruled the holy city. Written on this [reliquary] in Frankish, Greek, and Syrian letters [was the information that] it contained [the remains of] the holy Protomartyr Step'annos. [Lord Sargis] sent this to the blessed convent of Noravank', where it remains there in the holy church.

**[181]** Then the Khwarazmian [Jalal ad-Din Mangobirti] took Jerusalem from the Franks and destroyed it severely. He filled the Temple of the Lord with blood, and, finding the venerable bishop Lord Sargis at the Sepulcher of the Lord singing hymns with three other companions, he beheaded him and shed his blood on the lid of the Lord's tomb. And thus was [Lord Sargis] crowned with a martyr's blood by Christ our God. [Sargis] was succeeded in his position by his sister's son, Lord Step'annos, for 20 years, and then by Lord Step'annos' brother's son, Lord Sargis, who was the son of the hermit Vahram, a wise and productive man, a choice and industrious *vardapet* who accomplished many noteworthy things in this House [g89] and adorned the churches with great vessels, and thus increased the splendor of the holy retreat beyond what it had been before. Now the people at Tat'ev [re]built the monastery which had remained ruined and deserted for many years, and the great and glorious Princes of Princes Smbat and Tarsayich, Liparit's sons, enriched it with everything needful. Thereafter, of those who had reigned together, there died first Lord Sagho'mo'n; then Lord Hayrapet died after a tenure of 40 years. Since the latter had ordained his brother's son, Yovhanne's, during his lifetime, after a tenure of three contentious years [Yovhanne's] also died and was buried alongside his uncle, Lord Hayrapet.

After that we, the weak and useless [Step'annos Orbelean] succeeded them on the rennovated throne of the metropolitanate of the House of Sisakan, ruling over the two united senior thrones and grand venues of solemnities, Tat'ev and Noravank' with all their dioceses. And now I sit here on this mountain under the arc of Heaven for such time as the Lord has allotted me [g90].

[182]

---

## 64.

### ***The beginning and cause of the building of the preeminent, blessed, renowned, and glorious convent and assemblage of Noravank'.***

Many years before this, in early and ancient times, a church had been built in a suitable place here in a very narrow valley. Made from stones cemented together and named after Saint Karapet, it was very marvellously built, awe-inspiring and renowned in the neighboring areas. Close to it flowed a stream of delicious water, and the entire valley was beautified with vineyards and was dense with fruit-bearing trees. There was also on a rocky hill another church in the same valley, built in the name of the blessed patriarch Phocas. Inside the church a small stream of water flowed under the *bema* and, mixed with the water, was a curative oil. We have heard from ancient traditions that some of the relics of the blessed patriarch Phocas had been brought and deposited there, and thus the place was called Phocas. Astonishing marvels occurred there, for all sorts of incurable and untreatable human ailments—syphilis, leprosy, and wounds which had putrified over a long time, were cured if the sufferers went there in faith and washed in [g91] the water and anointed themselves with the oil. If it was a fatal [illness], then the sufferer would die at once. For this reason, the place was greatly renowned throughout the land.

Then most difficult times arrived, with the destruction of the entire land, the elimination of the kingdom of Baghk', the killing of King Senek'erim, the elimination of the lordship of Baghk', and the destruction and silencing of all worship in the convents. Now in the year 554 [A.D. 1105] there was a certain bishop at Yovhannuvank' named Yovhanne's. He was filled with all virtue and completely clothed in Christ. He was from a noble family, son of the glorious Prince Hasan of Baghk', and had in his hand all the *azats* of that kingdom. He was a descendant of the great Hamtun. This Yovhanne's, following the destruction of his land, after wandering about here and there, came to the district of Vayots'dzor. He wanted to live in the ravine of the retreat of Noravank', close to the impregnable fortress of Hrasek, by the mighty and marvellous church of Surb Karapet. He went to the great king of the Persians, Sultan Mahmut, became acquainted with him, and received from him a *farman* and *manshur* for that place. Freely dwelling there, he gathered clerics and hermits and distanced from the place [g92] all secular folk. And he put up signs of the cross around all the perimeters so that neither women nor lascivious men would enter. From the surrounding areas—from the people of Gandzak and Txarbi—he received lands and gardens as legacies for the church.

[183] [Yovhanne's] was being harassed by the accursed and abominable fortress keeper of Hrasek, who was [named] Xaxrik of Khorasan, and who was hunting to kill the blessed bishop and wreck the home of the clerics at the holy convent. [Yovhanne's] disguised himself as a Persian, since he knew their language well, and went as a fugitive to the sultan in the city of Isphahan (Aspahan). Now it happened that [the sultan] had a single son who was suffering unbearable pain from an illness and was close to death. All the strategems of the doctors [had failed and] had been stopped, and the lad's parents and the sultan's mother were in great sorrow and mourning. But then the sultan's mother saw in a dream that a stranger had entered the city, a bishop by the name of Yovhanne's who healed the child. Therefore, they immediately made inquiries, found [Yovhanne's] and brought him before the great sultan. [The latter], having been informed about this, arose and prostrated himself before [Yovhanne's], asking if there was any way that he could cure the child's ailment. The blessed

bishop then went in great optimistic faith [g93] to the half-dead boy and, with Apostolic strength, expelled the sickness and issued the divine command that he should arise from his deathbed. The astonished sultan was completely dumbfounded by this [healing] and asked [Yovhanne's] the reason for his coming there. [Yovhanne's] acquainted him with the bitter persecutions of the emir of Hrasek fortress and from another *ghulam* who was at Anapat fortress.

[The sultan] was furious when he heard about this and, to show his gratitude, gave Hrasek fortress to the bishop, and confirmed this with a *manshur* (written deed). He also sent trusted men to accompany him and to slay the fortress-keeper with his family, and to give the place to the bishop. In addition, because of this same Lord Yovhanne's, the sultan's mother gifted Anapat fortress with twelve fields, confirmed by an inviolable charter and unbreakable *manshur* as a legacy to the blessed church of Noravank'. We ourselves have read and confirmed these royal documents which also, in the Tachik manner, strengthen [the implementation of the provisions] by endless anathemas and oaths. Then the bishop came to his place with exceeding joy and with the escorts who seized the emir and his family at Hrasek fortress, casting them over a cliff. And they demolished that place. Moreover, the other persecuting fortress at Anapat was given to the church, along with its fields [g94].

**[184]** Subsequently, however, Hrasek fortress was rebuilt and Persians dwelled in it. But then [Armenians] retook it in the days of Atabek Ivane' by means of a certain Axt'amar of Ar'p'ay and Prince Vasak of Xache'n, who was the father of the pious and greatly respected prince Prosh, by order of Ivane' and with his might. As for Anapat, it has remained attached to the blessed church to this day. The bishop was full of all virtues and practised very great asceticism. So many miracles manifested themselves [because of him] that once he had ordered the [local] frogs to be silent, and they have remained silent [there] to the present. Also, there was a woman and her suckling baby from the hamlet of Txarbi who accidentally fell off a large precipice facing the monastery. When the holy man saw this, he made the sign of the cross and they were unharmed, returned home whole, and said; "Lord Yovhanne's was standing there on the ground and saved us by catching us in his hands."

[Bishop Yovhanne's], having lived in this manner for many years, died in the year 663 of the Armenian Era [A.D. 1214] and was buried in his own oratory between two rocks in the same convent. Very great powers emanated from his grave, for it could destroy mice and caterpillars, and cure all sorts of illnesses besetting people, animals, and crops. After him, when Eltkuz had married the sultan's mother [g95] and sat on the royal throne, there came the gracious Lord Step'annos, who was called *Fakhr al-Mseh* ("Glory of the Messiah") by the Atabek, and resided in the holy convent of Noravank', for his old see had been wrecked and ruined. Moreover, his father, Lord Grigor, was buried there. Having established this as the home of the episcopacy, [Lord Step'annos] received from the great Atabek a *firman* and a charter regarding this diocese, that the heirs of the blessed church be assured this legacy. He also requested an encyclical letter from the great *kat'oghikos* of the Armenians, Lord Grigor, [affirming] that these districts be [considered] the inheritable property of the blessed convent of Noravank'.

**[185]** Then [Step'annos] went to Atabek Eltkuz and showed him the sultan's letter and obtained from him, additionally, a written *menshur* confirming the inheritance of all these areas for the church at Noravank'. [Step'annos] also requested the village of Agarakidzor which was graciously given to the holy church—this, too, by means of a valid *menshur*, and everything belonging to the monastery was made free from all lay taxes: land, water, vineyards, village and fields, and even Anapat fortress. After living for many years, [Step'annos] died there and was buried alongside his father in the year 655 [A.D. 1216]. He was succeeded by Lord Sargis, who [g96] suffered martyrdom in Jerusalem. [Sargis] had been a bishop during the lifetime [of Step'annos] and resided at Noravank'. Lord Step'annos had placed in security with a bishop at Atsopoy vank' in Shahapo'nk' named Petros, a holy cross which had been touched by God. This cross had been Lord Yovhanne's' great cross. [He had also stored there two other crosses. One] was covered with gold leaf and [the

other] set in a golden arcade which was covered with precious stones from one side to the other. Now when this became known to Pr'osh's father, Prince Vasak, who was commander in these areas, he forcibly took these three holy crosses. He took the senior cross and presented it as a gift to Atabek Ivane'. The two other crosses, the one [decorated with] gold leaf and the other [with jewel-covered] arches, [Vasak] took and placed in his own monastery at the convent of Kech'ar'u. Now it happened in the year 665 [A.D. 1216], while Atabek Ivane' was besieging the fortress called Chare'k', that Lord Sargis went before the Atabek by order of, and with written instructions from, his mother's brother, Lord Step'annos, requesting the [senior] holy cross, which had been touched by God. [Ivane's] official, who held command over his entire principality, was the great senior *hejub* ("chamberlain"), the pious prince called Bupak. [Bupak] was the father-in-law of Liparit, son of Elikum. Liparit was greatly [g97] beloved by Ivane', and that cross was kept in the treasury at Pghndzahank'.

[186] They put the bishop face to face with the Atabek and displayed the document, and greatly concerned themselves with freeing the captive [cross]. Considerable sums were distributed among the senior and intimate advisors. The pious Liparit offered a sum of 500 *dahekans* to the Atabek, who sought [an additional] 500 *dahekans* of pure red gold [Venetian ducats]. Thus, for money, [Ivane'] satisfied his mind to return [the cross]. He ordered that the bishop be summoned and then laid this [additional] condition on him: "If someone wants that cross to be returned, let him immediately give the fortress over to me and I will put [the cross] in your hand. Otherwise, you will return empty-handed."

At sunrise, by the power of the blessed cross, the residents of the fortress themselves, voluntarily, brought a key to the fortress and put it before the Atabek. They also brought along keys to three other fortresses and put them before him. [Atabek Ivane'] was dumbfounded at this miracle and ordered his senior *ts'iknawslar* ("secretary") of the divan, who was named Onofre', to go with Lord Sargis and give him the cross located in the convent of Pghdzahank'. This was done at once. [Lord Sargis] went and took the cross with joy [g98], and then quickly came back to the convent of Noravank'. That blessed cross was housed there. [Lord Sargis] also found that his mother's brother, Lord Step'annos, had died. As we have said, Liparit had given 1000 red *dahekans* as the redemption price for the captive cross. As for the [other crosses], the one with gold leaf and the one with the arches, they remained at Kech'ar'u.

---

[187]

## 65.

### ***Concerning the construction of the church at Noravank' and the spiritual gifts given to it as legacy; and about other building and labors undertaken by Liparit and the Orbelean princes.***

The fortunate bishop, Lord Sargis, after the death of Lord Step'annos, wanted to build a church and further embellish the blessed convent. Now there was a certain man named Yovhane's, the brother's son of Lord Step'annos, who was a rival and who himself wanted to occupy the see of Siwnik'. He had gone off to Aght'amar and had been ordained there. The blessed patriarch, Lord Sargis, since he disliked dissensions and quarrels in the Church, left the entire diocese to Lord Yovhane's. He took for himself the district of Vayots'dzor, Chahuk, and Naxjawan as legacy [g99] of his holy convent of Noravank', and left the rest to him.

Then [Lord Sargis] himself went to the *kat'oghikos* of the Armenians, Lord Kostandin, and received from him this diocese with an authentic and unbreakable document as well as an encyclical letter, so that the districts be firmly established as belonging to the blessed church as its legacy. [These provisions] were buttressed by endless terrible anathemas, so that no one—neither *kat'oghikoi*, princes, nor bishops—would dare to oppose

or disrupt what had been designated in the deed. There was also some dispute over the blessed cross. Two bishops, along with Liparit and his son, Elikum, went to court in Dvin to Atabek Ivane'. [Ivane'] assembled his grandees and ordered them to examine the matter. [Present at the assembly were] Bubak and [the] *martsuan*, Ivane, the *dpe'l* and the *memnashghel* [or, Memna Jaqeli], the great *chghawnditel* (bishop) who had come from the kingdom [of Georgia], the *tsiram tsghawr* (abbot) of Vardze' and the abbot of Pghndzahank', the great *mamt'avar* (patriarch) of Garshite', the Gagets'ik' and the Matsnaberdets'ik', and, in addition, many other *didebuls* (lords): the qadi of Tiflis, the qadi of Ani, the qadi of Dvin, and the one called *shex* of Surmari. [Among the examiners were also] the great bishop of Ani, the bishop of Bjni, and the bishop of Haxbat. They examined the laws and judged thus [g100]:

"This has the same aspect as [the situation] of a dead person and a captive. If a dead person is revived, his birth is not from his parents but due to his reviver. Similarly, if a captive is freed by someone, he no longer belongs [to his captor], but to whomever freed him.

Now just as this land, which was conquered by the sword and strength of arm, is considered the hereditary property of the kingdom of Georgia, so, too, this cross was Ivane's property. And when it was transferred to Liparit and Lord Sargis for the large sum of 1000 *dahekans*, it belongs to Liparit and to his church in perpetuity."

**[188]** The Atabek and assembly of nobles and princes were greatly satisfied with this decision and ordered that the cross was unquestionably the property of Liparit and his own [folk].

The bishop Lord Sargis conferred with the great Liparit and together, with great labor and countless expenditures, they began to construct a lovely church with eight altars at Noravank'. It was completed in seven years, in 672 of the Armenian Era [A.D. 1223]. The consecration ceremony for this holy temple was held, and it was attended by a solemn assembly of bishops, *vardapets*, senior princes, *azats*, and *tanute'rs*. Among [the attendees] was Prince Bupak, who gave as a gift to the newly-built and holy church out of his legitimate (*halal*) earnings [g101] and patrimony, full rights over the field of Aghberis with its boundaries, [including the] watered and unwatered places, the great valley called T'madzor, as well as Gnjeats' with its boundaries, as far as the place called Hayreats' tap' in Gandzak. [Bupak] ordered that a deed should be written on a monument with unbreakable provisions and that there should be established in his memory an annual offering of ten masses for his mother. This was entrusted to Lord Sargis. The deed had this content:

"In the time of the kingdom of Lasha, son of T'amar, when Shahanshah was *amirspasalar* of the Armenians and Georgians, during the atabekate of Ivane', his father's brother, I, Bupak, Prince of Princes, the sinful servant of Christ, came to the consecration ceremony of the holy church of Noravank', to our fortunate patriarch, Lord Sargis. And I gave as a gift from my legitimate patrimony—which I took from the foreigners by the strength of my arm and by the shedding of my own blood—which was designated as my own [property] by my lords (*paronayk'*) with a great charter, the village of Aghberis with all its borders, to the blessed church of Noravank', to [the church of] *Surb* Karapet and to the blessed *Naxavkay* (Protomartyr) free of all taxes. Hereafter, for all eternity, no one has the authority to oppose this [bequest], neither senior people, be they my own [folk] or others. Lord Sargis and other monks have established that ten times annually [g102] mass will be offered on the feast of Vardavar' (Transfiguration), for the soul of my mother. Should anyone be brazen enough to attempt to oppose these gifts of mine, may he inherit the the fate of Judas and the crucifiers and be judged and punished along with all the evil-doers, beginning with Cain and extending to the antichrist, and be cursed in life and in death by the Holy Trinity, all the saints, and the three blessed Councils. My line and my children shall have no rights or rule over these places. Moreover, should seniority pass to a Tachik, and should he attempt to oppose [these provisions], may he be cursed by his God and denied by his prophet. May untold thousands of curses be upon

him, his sons, and descendants from here until eternity. [Done] in 672 of the Armenian Era [A.D. 1223]."

**[189]** Prior to this, the village of Agarakidzor had been seized. Therefore, Liparit requested it with many entreaties from the *amirspasalar* Zak'are'. He brought and showed him the *menshur* of Atabek Eltkuz, and got the village. Then he ordered that a memorial be written for himself at the monastery of Noravank', and he strengthened it with curses so that no one would dare to alienate [the village] from the blessed church. With his own hand he wrote this:

"I, the sinful servant of Christ, Zak'are', the *amirspasalar*, son of the great Sargis, the *sparapet* of the Armenians and Georgians [g103], have given the village of Agarakidzor to Noravank', free of all taxes. And I requested from Lord Sargis, who leads the blessed convent, that for ten days during the year mass must be offered for me without any obstruction. After our passing, let no one—either from our own [folk] or foreigners—dare to shear this village from the blessed church. Should they attempt it, may they be cursed by Almighty God and all the saints and may they share the fate of Judas and the other crucifiers and apostates. And may they be liable for our own sins. Established by the will of God in the year 660 of the Armenian era [A.D. 1211]."

After this, the great and pious Liparit gave many gifts to the blessed convent, since he had been given the district and the monastery by a charter written in Armenian by Atabek Ivane', by order of the monarch [Queen Tamar] and Lasha Georgi, and the inviolable royal seal was stamped on it with his own ring. And so, through the labors of Lord Sargis, he built a wondrous chapel for atonement and adorned it with vessels, embellishing it with all kinds of effects and hereditary dominions, he and his sons. We shall describe these in the proper place. He wrote a memorial inscription on the blessed church, with this content:

"In 672 of the Armenian Era [A.D. 1223], by the will of God, I, Liparit [g104], son of Elikum, grandson of the great [Liparit] Orbelean, [made this inscription]. My father, due to a great enmity, arose from his patrimonial land and the king of the Abkhaz, and went to Atabek Eltkuz in the House of the Persians. [Eltkuz] received him with great splendor and deep affection and gave him as a gift the city of Hamian. Then, after some time, he left me an orphan. In ignorance we had been deceived by them, but then I became acquainted with my patrimonial faith and, while still a youth, I turned again to the radiant faith of Saint Gregory. I came to the great Atabek Ivane' who received us with great affection. In place of my patrimony he gave me Hrashkaber, with its income, as well as many other villages in Vayots'dzor, Geghak'uni, in Kotayk' and in Kayen. With great hope I constructed this monastery called Noravank' during the tenure of Lord Sargis as head of Siwnik' and I built this holy church at great expense. Also at great cost, I retrieved the senior blessed cross from the House of the Atabek Ivane' and placed it here. I also liberated Agarakidzor with its boundaries, and I gave Txarb village with all its borders as well as a district in the village of Hamaser."

**[190]** Lord Sargis and the monks wrote a memorial for their brothers and parents as follows [g105]:

"In 710 of the Armenian Era [A.D. 1261], I, Smbat, Prince of Princes, [erected] this imperishable memorial inscription. [I am] the son of the great Liparit, who constructed this chapel and again renovated our churches, and I adorned with gold reliquaries the divine crosses and blessed relics which we gathered here. From my legitimate patrimonial holdings I also have given two villages, Awe'sh and Anapat, which had been shorn from the place, as well as a newly-planted large vineyard in Akor'i with its waters. Lord Sargis and the monks have designated masses in our memory for an entire year without fail to be offered on the senior bema: Sundays and Saturdays for Liparit; Thursdays for Asp'a; Mondays and Tuesdays for Elikum; Wednesdays for Ivane'; and Fridays for P'axradula.

I also have given the vineyards at Haghots'mots' and Ch'u. And we have established in honor of our grandmother, Xat'un, that mass be offered in all these churches for one day. Following this, we also gave the villages of Azat with all its borders [including] the surrounding mountain and field extending from the high peak of the mountain named K'ur'akaxaz, to Erevan, Haghots'in and Chawadzor, and to the head of Akor'i. Included in this is the vineyard I myself planted in Tsaghkadzor for the souls of my brother's son, Burt'e'l, who as a lad was killed in battle in the land of the [g106] Xalandars in the plain of the Khazars, who are now called Qipchaqs. And we designated for him 15 days of masses to be offered annually without hindrance: ten days on the senior feasts of David, Jacob, and others, and five days on New Sunday. Now should anyone—either our own [folk] or foreigners, either nobles or tradesmen (*dzer'nawor*)—attempt to obstruct our memorial or, for whatever reason, try to oppose or ravish [the gifts], may he be cursed with an unbreakable curse by God, the creator of all, along with the devil and his own kind and the serpent. May such a one be rejected and cursed by the Apostles, prophets, patriarchs, martyrs, and the holy angels. May he be condemned and punished by the unquenchable fire along with Cain, Kam, Korah, Dathan and Abiram, with Jezebel and Gehazi, Judas, Arius, and the apostate Vasak.

Let masses be offered for us every week for three days on the senior altar, on Sunday, Saturday, and Monday: on Sunday and Saturday for the sinful soul of myself, Liparit; on Thursday for my wife, Asp'a. Now may those who are inheritors of the blessed church request forgiveness for our sins and long life for our sons Elikum, Smbat, and the rest, and perform our memorial without hindrance. Should someone oppose this spiritual donation [g107] of villages or the other arrangements and try to seize it from the blessed church, may he be cursed by the Holy Trinity in body and spirit and anathematized by the three blessed councils and all the saints. May he be condemned along with Satan, Judas, the antichrist, and all the apostates at the fearsome tribunal of Christ. May those who implement [the provisions] be blessed. Now should a Tachik become superior and try to expropriate it, may he be rejected by his own faith, by God, and by his prophet with a thousand thousand curses (*nalat'*). May the sky deny him of rain and may the ground not bear fruit for him."

**[191]** When affairs were succeeding in this way, Lord Sargis, after many labors, went to the blessed city of Jerusalem, as we mentioned earlier. He died a martyr's death there. He was succeeded in his position by Lord Step'annos. [Step'annos] went to the great *kat'oghikos* of the Armenians, Lord Kostandin, who again confirmed this convent as the seat of bishops and confirmed as belonging to its theme all of Vayots'dzor, Naxjawan, and the district of Chahuk. [Step'annos] received an encyclical letter which was buttressed with terrible anathemas and fortified so that in future times no one would dare to violate [its terms]. It had this content:

[RGB: the next few paragraphs seem to be out of order. We translate as is.]

In his day the great and royal Prince Smbat, son of Liparit, built a belfry with a marvellous design, a place of prayer, at the door of the holy *Naxavkay* [Protomartyr], built of dressed stone and cemented rocks. In the days of Lord Sargis, who followed him, he adorned the church with unequaled vessels, costly treasures of gold and silver and the finest silk. Moreover, he gifted to the holy convent from his patrimonial inheritance three villages and vineyards in Akor'i; Haghots'mots', Ar'p'ay, Ch'u, and Amaghvadzor. Axt'amar and Arp'aslan [also] designated [properties] to the convent. And they wrote a memorial [stipulating] masses for themselves. Similarly, there was a certain priest named Shnorhawor who gave much of his patrimony in the same village as well as a thousand *drams*. He also designated masses [in his memory]. In this time the evil one [Satan], stirred up a battle in the Church. Some, behaving like [the Biblical figures of] Simon and Achitopel, had designs on the blessed Apostolic see and started to dispute and trample on the borders of the sublime scepter of Siwnik', which had been firmly established with Apostolic and canonical orders from very ancient times. A certain prince by the name of Pr'osh, son of Vasak, wanted to shear away his lands and villages in the district

of Vayots'dzor, and give them as inheritance to another church. There was a certain impious [g109] man from the district of Ernjak named Yovhanne's, son of a priest by the name of Sedrak, from the village of Aprahunik', who senselessly became infected with the evil disease of vainglory and greed. He went to the blessed *kat'oghikos* of the Armenians, Lord Kostandin, and, fooling him with deceptive words, was ordained a bishop. Then he came to the monastery of Ernjak and claimed that [the monastery] should be the seat of a bishop because there were graves of patriarchs located there, even though they had by chance died there when the fortress [of Ernjak] was being made more secure, in the time of the bishops of Siwnik'.

**[192]** [Yovhanne's] had the support of a foreign *hazarapet*, and he forcibly seized the district of Ernjak. As a result, by order of and with the aid of the great and pious Prince of Princes Tarsayich, Smbat's brother, the bishops Lord Sargis of Noravank' and Lord Yovhanne's of Tat'ev, arose and went to the great *kat'oghikos* of the Armenians, Lord Yakob [Yakob I Klayets'i, 1268-1286], who had succeeded Lord Kostandin [Kostandin I Bardzrberdts'i, 1221-1267]. They informed him of the calamitous disaster and tearing apart of the Apostolic diocese. [Kat'oghikos Yakob] heard about this and grew angry. He ordered that a letter be written with frightful anathemas, removing the miserable Yovhanne's at Ernjak from [spiritual] life. Moreover, [the *kat'oghikos*] with scathing anathemas, forbade anyone from daring to fragment that diocese. He also wrote to Prince [g110] Pr'osh, blaming him and his sons and ordering him to desist from this plan, otherwise he would inherit severe curses. The bishops, having concerned themselves with this issue, returned to their own places. First, they presented the letter to Pr'osh. The latter, yielding to the impulse of his brilliant intellect and his fervent faith, humbly submitted, confessed his sins, and ceased all opposition. With his own hand he wrote [a document] whose sworn provisions confirmed the convent, so that thereafter neither he nor his own [folk] be regarded as responsible for such intrigues. He restored everything to the theme and was blessed by the bishops. As for the man who was holed up at Ernjak, they seized him and showed the letter filled with anathemas to him. And then they deprived him of his episcopal rank and the priesthood. After this they confirmed the entire district [in its earlier status]. As for the encyclical letter of Lord Yakob which they had brought, here is its content:

[RGB: the description is missing or out of place].

After some days, a man named Mahevan, from the great clan of the princes of Baghk', grandson of the Jurjeans, died without a male heir. During the period of his ancestors' ruin, Atabek Ivane' had brought him [to the area] and settled him in Vayots'dzor, giving him as patrimony Noraberd [fortress] and other lands. When he died, a part of Mahevan's patrimonial holdings were bequeathed to his brother's son, Amira. [Amira] took half of the fortress and as much of the water [g111] that flows through the fields in the direction of Vardenik. Then [Amira] came to Lord Sargis at the holy convent and adopted as his "son" the blessed church and the holy cross. He gave as a gift his patrimonial share of Noron and the house and vineyard at Ar'p'a and all his holdings. He wrote his own memorial inscription and, with great and fearsome curses, restricted and fortified [his bequest] so that after his passing no one would dare to overturn this spiritual gift to the holy church. He also stipulated for himself twenty days of masses annually without fail.

"And now, should anyone—be they of the grandees or the lesser [folk], nobles or tradesfolk (*dzer'naworats'*)—go against this gift and, for whatever reason, think to remove Nurb from the blessed church of Noravank; or, should the [religious] leaders of the place weaken or ignore offering the masses, may such [people] be expunged from the Book of Life and share the lot of Satan, Judas, and all evildoers and may they be anathematized by God and all the saints. May their names and memories be erased from the world, and may they be liable for our own sins. But may those who implement [the provisions of the gift] be blessed. Should seniority pass to a Tachik and should he attempt to overturn [the provisions], may he be cursed by God and by His prophet. May what is legitimately his (*halal*) become forbidden (*haram*). May the sky rain down fire upon him [g112] and

may the earth bear him thorns. And may he and his children and his family be removed from life. Amen."

However, there were many other gifts made to the blessed church by the native *azats* and the select *tanute'rs*, such as by the Axt'amarean clan, which had dwelled in the village of Ar'p'a since ancient times. They donated their patrimony, the upper portion of the vineyard at Dayek k'ar.

[193]

---

## 66.

### ***Concerning the nature of the great naxarardom of the Orbeleans; about their coming to this country; and many other writings about diverse events and deeds.***

At the beginning of the patriarchate of the land of the Armenians and Georgians and at the head of our clan was T'orgom. He had eight brave and gigantic sons. The senior [son] among them was Hayk; second was K'art'los; third was Bardos; fourth was Movkan; fifth was Lekan; sixth was Heros; seventh was Kovkas; and eighth was Egere's. When T'orgom divided his legacy among his sons, he gave the land of Armenia, with all [g113] its borders to Hayk, while [he gave] to K'art'los and the other brothers the northern Tsmak ("forested") lands.

K'art'los went to the mountain named Armaz and built a house for himself there and an impregnable fortress in an appropriate place. He named the fortress Orbe't' and he called that land—from Xunan to the Sea or Sper [Black Sea]—K'art'li after his own name. After the passage of much time, with sons succeeding their fathers, the [distinct] patriarchate of K'art'li was achieved in the period of the great King Xosrov of the Persian kingdom, who was called K'e'k'awus. It was the rule for the Iberians/Georgians to call their chief "Lord of the House" (*tanute'r*), since they did not have a king. The Lord of the House dwelled in the great city of K'art'li called Mts'xit'a, which had been built by K'art'los' senior son, Mts'xit'ay. In that period [these folk] were oppressed by the tyrannical king of the Persians, to the point that they preferred death to the lives they led. In those days the chief of the land of the Iberians/Georgians was the Persian Ardarmos, by order of Abriton who ruled Persia, the Iberians/Georgians, and the Aghuans. It was this Ardarmos who built Mts'xita again and fortified it with cemented rocks. He also built a wall from Mount Armaz to the Kur River. Now after his death, four men ruled the Iberians/Georgians, while disturbances and corruption generally reigned over everyone [g114]. This obtained during the period of K'ek'awus Xosrov and then under his successor, K'ue' Xosrov. Meanwhile, the Iberians/Georgians dwelled in great sorrow and without hope from any quarter.

Now it came about that in this period a great confusion and disturbance enveloped the kingdom of the land of Chenastan. [Chenastan] is located to the east of the land of the Xalandirs, bordering the [lands of the] Khazars and the Huns, and extending in length as far as Mount Emawon. For following the death of the king—whom they call [the] Chenbakur—the royal descendants began to war against each other. When one side became strong[er], the other side fled. [Among the fugitives] was a young man, successful, attractive, powerful, and personable. He took his family, a royal brigade, and treasure, and, on swift horses, flew over many lands. [This force] had such a fearsome aspect that no one dared to oppose them. Passing through the Darial Gate, as though by Divine Providence, they came to the land of K'art'li, to the Lord of the House, at Mts'xita. And they saw that [the Iberians/Georgians] were oppressed by, and in great fear and worry of, the Persians.

[194] [The fugitives] spoke with the Lord of the House and the most senior nobles, saying: "We are [descendants] of the kings of the Chenk'. Separated from our brothers, we have come here [g115] and are pleased by your secure land. Because of your grief, your gods have sent us to help you. We want either to stay

in the Persian kingdom or else to cross over to the autocrat of the Greeks. If we please you, ready a place of rest for us. Then, either we will free you from your difficulties from here, or else we will take to the road and go wherever God designs for us to go." When the senior *tanute*'rs of the land observed men of such bravery and strength, and when they heard their pleasing words, they were greatly delighted with the newcomers, and they held a great celebration. They received [the fugitives] with great glory and magnificent honor and really liked them. As a place of habitation, they gave them the impregnable fortress of O'rbe't', which K'art'los himself had built, and many districts and very great hamlets and fortresses as their hereditary possessions.

[The asylum seekers] were quite happy and settled at O'rbe't'i. After a long time they became known as Orbulk', that is, residents of O'rbe't'i, for it is the custom of this [Georgian] people to name their princes after the place of their habitation as, for example, the Mete'ulk', Mep'e'ulk', and Mrajulk'; and in Heret'i, the Herist'avk', and in Jawaxet', Jawaxurk', and in Kaxet'i [g116], Kaxets'ik', and in Lext', Lext'imayk', and many other [such cases]. For this reason, until today that clan is called Orbelk', those who previously were called Cheneulk', that is, Chenats'ik' (Chinese). Now while affairs were thus, they themselves assembled the House of the Iberians/Georgians and, massing troops, rose up against all the oppressors, broke them and put to flight their enemies, the Persians. Then there was peace in that land. As a result, [the Orbeleans] were designated *asparapets* [commanders-in-chief of the army] and military heads of the entire House of the Iberians/Georgians. When the Iberians/Georgians enthroned their first king, P'ar'nawaz [Pharnabazus (P'arnavaz) I, 299-234 B.C.], the Orbeleans were even more honored by him. In the land of the Iberians/Georgians, there was no [family] which was their equal, excepting the royal [family].

We learned this from dim references in the history of the Iberians/Georgians. For it happened that as a result of the malice of King Ge'orgi—who exterminated [the Orbeleans] in the land of the Georgians [in A.D. 1177]—their name was expunged from their history and from all writings, [including] ecclesiastical writings. Consequently, in our investigation we learned only a small amount, and that from knowledgeable people and from surviving colophons here and there, and more from traditions of our ancestors which fathers related to their sons, down to our own time. However, because the earliest accounts of their legends as well as all [g117] accounts of the brave and noteworthy deeds of the Orbelean clan in Iberia/Georgia were altered in their chronicles called *K'art'li Ts'xovreba* [*History of Georgia*], we could not learn precisely about matters and the ordering of events we have put in our book, [from Georgian sources]. Nonetheless, we have gleaned and have included some material from Armenian-language books about the destruction [of the Orbeleans in Georgia] and were especially informed by the wonderful history of Mxit'ar of Ani.

**[195]** Now in 498 of the Armenian Era [A.D. 1049], during the reigns of Dawit', [king] of the Georgians, of the *shahnshah* of the Armenians, Gagik, who was in Vanand, and during the reign as emperor of the Byzantines of Monomachus [Constantine IX Monomachus, 1042-1055], the Ishmaelites, born of Hagar, observed the weakened condition of the Christian peoples. They alerted one another in Khorasan, Khwarazmia, in P'ars, Kirman, Bukhara, Mazandaran, Iraq, in Baghdad, Basra, Arran, and Atrpatakan. There assembled multitudes of Persians, Khazars, Khwarazmians and Arabs and, additionally, the Scythians of Turkestan, which came and encamped in the plain of Karin, in countless, inestimable armies. They devised a plan which they were unable to bring to fruition, namely, to remove and eliminate the religion and the Christian name in the lands of the Armenians, Georgians, and Byzantines [g118].

The bitter news of these world-destroyers quickly reached the Byzantine emperor, while terror gripped everyone. Therefore, they sent Comnenus to the area with the troops of Trabizond. They also requested united assistance from the Armenians and Georgians, so that they might perhaps escape the terrible scourge of the Southerners, which threatened them like an abyss. Now when King Dawit' and Gagik heard about this, they did not dare to go against the Ishmaelite troops. Instead, with the greatest entreaties, they convinced the brave and invincible Liparit Orbelean to go and join with the Byzantine troops to resist the invaders in battle. They themselves, trembling with fear, holed up in the fortresses of [their] lands. Liparit agreed [to go] and said,

with a brave heart: "I go against the foreigners and will give my life for the Christian faith. With the might of God, either I will return [safely] or else I will die for Christ. O king, I entrust my descendants to you so that they will not be deprived of honor or of our patrimony by you, due to the envy and wickedness of your Georgian *azats*."

Having said this, Liparit held a military review of the *azats* and his troops. He held half the kingdom [g119] and had mustered 700 grandee *azats* who were his own servants, as well as 16,000 [other] fighting men. He also took 10,000 royal troops. They went to Karuts' plain in Vanand where they joined 15,000 Byzantine troops. In all, there were 41,000 cavalry. Now the foreigners first had destroyed Ordu village. Then they had spread about raiding all the surrounding districts and had encamped in that same plain. Thus [the Byzantines] ranged themselves, facing them at dawn. They ranged themselves into three brigades—the advance-guard fighters, the center, and the rear. Compared to the numberless multitude of the Ishmaelites, Liparit's troops seemed [as insignificant] as water-carriers or those who fetch weapons [from the fallen]. Observing this, the invincible Liparit fortified his brigade by saying: "Fear not. Merely strengthen yourselves through the name of Christ and make the sign of the cross, and the victory will be ours." Then he himself dismounted from his horse, knelt and made the sign of the blessed cross, and committed himself to Christ. Around his neck he hanged a fragment of the redeeming Cross. Thus armed, he mounted his Arabian steed. He threw aside his shield with its gold designs and, taking a flexible javelin [g120] in his powerful left hand, and a broad two-edged steel sword in his right hand, with his formidable mace like a blacksmith's malet or a rock cutter's sledgehammer hanging at his side. Thus [armed] did [Liparit] bravely cross the line of fighters, from one side to the other. His golden breastplate and helmet glittered like the sun.

**[196]** Puffing and roaring like a lion, he challenged them to single combat, saying: "I am Liparit of Abkhazia, come you, brave Persians and Aryans, and let us do battle together." And though he challenged them many times, not one warrior dared to confront him. Whenever Liparit, like an eagle, sprang forth at them, they retreated and trampled each other. When Liparit saw that their hearts had been shattered and their strength had been weakened, he turned back to his own brigade and encouraged them to advance. With a fearsome shout [the two armies] engaged each other. The din of battle was as frightening as a storm with the booming of thunder from clouds and flashes of lightning. Liparit advanced like a cloud ablaze, showering sparks on many, and, like a flame racing through the reeds, he split their forces and penetrated through [their ranks]. To his right and left flowed [g121] rivers of blood and he piled up corpses from the brigades of the foreigners as though they were rabbits. Thus did brave Liparit kill and defeat the Ishmaelites and put to flight the few survivors, through the power of Christ our God.

At mid day they turned back from their exhausting work, pleased and delighted with the results of their great labors. However, those Georgian *azats*—who are wont to slay their masters—were frightened by his awesome power and, after plotting with Liparit's lordly (*de'depul*) military commanders, they suddenly cut the sinews on [Liparit's] horse's leg, and Liparit was thrown to the ground. The multitude surrounded him and killed him on the spot. Thus did they bring sorrow and mourning to the Christians. When the Ishmaelites became aware of this, with great delight they turned back. Putting their swords to work, they destroyed the Georgian troops. Some took to flight and spread throughout the country. Thus was accomplished the destruction of the lands of the Armenians and Georgians, as the Tachiks generally ruled over their districts. A short while later, Alp Arslan took Ani in 513 [of the Armenian Era (A.D. 1064)] and Kars, all of the districts of Shirak, Vanand, Arsharunik' and the lands of Ararat [g122], Sisakan, Baghk', and the entire country up to the gates of Tiflis.

On that day, the accursed and lord-killing troops of the Georgians opened such a gate of great ruination generally for the Christians. I, however, regard the killing of Liparit not as the loss of his person, but as a finding of great salvation, for he had given himself for the Christian flock and had greatly elevated them. Innocently slain by his own side, he was crowned with a martyr's blood and went to Christ, the King of

Kings, to receive recompense and gifts from Him in exchange for his heavy torments. Then, with great mourning, his faithful subordinates raised the body of this handsome youth and brave martyr and took it to Kars. They prepared his coffin, adorning it with regal splendor and clothing woven with gold. Then they moved it to their great and renowned Bet'ania monastery, which [Liparit's] ancestors had built as their mausoleum.

**[197]** King Dawit' and all his grandees arrived and greatly mourned over him; placing him in a tomb along with his fathers. The honor and standing of the Orbelean clan in the House of the [Georgian] kings was as follows: they were the *spasalars* of all the troops and [military] commander(s) of the entire land of the Georgians. Moreover, all the officials [g123] in the royal household were under their control. They had 12 banners with 1,000 men for each one. As it was the rule that the king should fly a scarlet flag with a white flame on it, [the Orbeleans] were ordered to fly a white flag with a scarlet flame on it. When they walked before the king or stood in his presence, they held a staff with a lion's head. During meals they sat on cushions in a place apart and higher than the other *didebul-naxarars* and ate at a silver table. They were coronants of the kings.

After much time, during the kingship of the mighty Dawit', son of Ge'orgi, the great *spasalar* Ivane' Orbelean, through his great bravery, enlarged the boundaries of Georgia by warring with Tachkasan. For [the Georgian forces] took from the Tachiks Tiflis, Tawush, Gag, Te'runakan, Lor'e, and Ani in the year 572 [A.D. 1123]. For this reason, [Ivane' Orbelean] was even more beloved and was rewarded by the king. He gave them, over and above their own patrimony, Lor'e' with its district, Agarak, the place of their palace, and Shamsхойl'te', [places] which were their patrimony, [the king] again gave to them with its district. With a great charter stamped with the royal signet ring, these were confirmed as their patrimony. Now upon the death of the mighty Dawit', rule was taken [g124] by his son, the brave Demetre', who followed his predecessors in bravery. [Demetre'] reigned for 33 years. He loved and honored Ivane' and his son, Smbat, even more. In [Demetre's] day, Ivane' and Smbat took Xunan, which for many years had been held by the Tachiks and that, too, was confirmed as part of [the Orbelean] patrimony in the year 577 [A.D. 1128]. After this, Ivane' died in deep old age. His son, Smbat, took his lordship. Know that [the Orbeleans], through marriage ties, had mixed with the line of the kings of the Georgians and the Armenian Kiwrikan kings, who were Bagratids. For this reason they had from them Bagratid names, such as Smbat, and Ivane, which is Yovhann'e's. Liparit and Elikum and Burt'e'l and others, whose ancient ancestors had come from the Chenk', took Georgian names.

Then the other Ivane', Abule't's son, took Dmanis. After many successes and very great feats of bravery, King Demetre' died in the year 607 [A.D. 1158]. The kingdom was taken by his son, Dawit' who, like his father, was a brave and wise man. After two years, he also died. While he lay dying, he summoned the *kat'oghikos* and the grandee *didebuls*, and his brother, Ge'orgi [g125] and his small son, Demna. Before him he placed the senior icon, the senior cross of salvation, and the holy Gospel, and said: "O you grandees of the Georgians, you yourselves know well what efforts my father expended on your behalf, how he renewed this kingdom and how, at the hour of his death he bestowed this kingdom on me through great oaths and in writing. And now I am close to death. My brother, Ge'orgi, has no claim upon this throne. Just as my father bestowed on me this throne of the kingdom as his property, now I, similarly, have bestowed it upon my son, Demna, in the presence of all of you. As for you, Ge'orgi my brother, remain in my position and be the military commander of our land. Eat of the portion of the inheritance which my father gave to me, until my boy has matured." Calling out Ivane', son of Smbat Orbelean, [the king] made him swear an irrevocable oath to preserve the child. Then he took the boy's hand and put it into Ivane's hand and entrusted him. And the [the king] made all the other *didebuls* swear not to harm the boy, but rather to anoint him as king when he had grown up.

**[198]** After this [King Dawit'] himself died. He was placed among his forefathers at Gelat'i. Thereafter the boy [Demna] lived in Ivane's house, where he was nourished and [g126] grew up. As for Ge'orgi, he himself wanted to rule as king, having won over the hearts of the grandee princes as well as the *kat'oghikos*. But they

did not dare to reveal their intention to the great Smbat Orbelean and to his sons, Ivane' and Liparit. After one month all the *didebuls* and *azats* assembled by Ge'orgi, including Ivane' and his people. It was then that Ge'orgi revealed his intention and, with many entreaties, convinced him, saying that "when my brother's son grows up I will not despoil him of his rights. Rather, in accordance with my brother's will, I will seat him on the throne of the kingdom." Consequently, all of them, united, anointed [Ge'orgi] as king. He was successful in all deed of valor and was very capable.

In [Ge'orgi's] day there was much expansion of his kingdom. And many of the battles he waged in person. Moreover, [conquests] undertaken by the brave and valiant *spasalar* Ivane' caused the entire House(s) of the Persians, Tachiks, and Turks to tremble. In the year 610 [A.D. 1161], this Ge'orgi took the city of Ani and the entire House of Shirak. [Ge'orgi] bestowed this as a gift on the great Ivane', *amirspasalar* of the Georgians, and son of Smbat Orbelean. He made this [land] part of [Ivane's] patrimony. Once this Ivane' struck at the Shahi-Armen at the gate of Ani. [The Shah-Armen] had come against the city with 40,000 troops [g127]. Even though King Ge'orgi had come in assistance, it was [Ivane'] who led the battle. On one occasion, the great Atabek Eltkuz had come against Ge'orgi with 100,000 men and wanted to destroy all of Georgia and seize the king. [Ivane'] put him to flight, displaying such tactics and such manly valor that [Eltkuz fled] in the night, leaving behind his tents, weapons, and an enormous amount of equipment and porters. [Eltkuz] escaped by a hairsbreadth. Now despite the fact that [Ivane'] had accomplished all this and displayed many other acts of service and very great deeds toward the king, it was only for appearances that [the king] elevated him with the greatest glory and honor. In his heart [the king] always suspected [Ivane'] because of the boy whom he had entrusted to him. [King Ge'orgi] was waiting for an appropriate time to betray him with covert actions. But he did not find [such a situation]. Moreover, Ivane', in his heart, was aware of this.

[Ivane's] father, Smbat, who was in deep old age, died and was buried alongside his fathers. His sons, Ivane' and Liparit, inherited his principality. Now in the year 626 of the Armenian Era [A.D. 1177], there was unrest and commotion in the kingdom of the Georgians, and the House of the Orbeleans was wiped out. For Ge'orgi had reigned for 21 years and [the legitimate heir] Demna had achieved his majority. While Ivane' was sitting with his brothers and [g128] sons, enjoying life at his palace in Agarak, the grandee *didebuls* came to him with Demna. And they said to [Ivane]: "Ivane', remember your vow and the oath you swore to King Dawit'. Do not be an oath-breaker. Behold, the time has come to enthrone the young Demna. Right now, Ge'orgi is sitting in Saxate' with just a few men. All of us hold firm to the oath which you swore to [Demna's] father." Ivane' replied to this: "God forbid that we plan to kill an anointed king. Rather, to fulfil our oath, let us seize Ge'orgi [and hold him] until we extract from him a sworn oath and a [written] document [saying] that he will submit to his brother's son. And then, let us release him to live and reside in his portion of the legacy which his father gave to him."

**[199]** All of them agreed to this declaration. Then they quickly began to assemble troops. However, a worthless youth who had heard this plan went at night and notified the king. [King Ge'orgi] mounted his horse and quickly fled to Tiflis where he fortified himself. Unawares, Ivane' mustered cavalry and arranged troops. All the chiefs and *azats* of Georgia were united with Ivane' [g129]. All of them in a body came to him at the palace in Agarak. [These included] the *eristavs* of K'art'li, the Ghawrzawrs and Jawaxurk', Kaxa and his sons, the great Kamragel, Memna Jaqeli and the Tashinats'ik', Hasan of Kayen and Grigor Apirat of Ani, whose forces were more than 30,000 men. Meanwhile, the king was alone, without troops, in Tiflis. He summoned to him a certain Qipchaq named Xupasar, and found some 5,000 troops, beyond which he had no aid.

When [the partisans of Demna] heard that the king had entered Tiflis and was fortified there, they did not go against him; rather, they waited for him to emerge. As the duration lengthened—as is the rule in unstable human affairs—the great Kamragel quit their union and secretly went to Ge'orgi. Seeing this, Grigor Mazhistros also went over to Ge'orgi, as did others, who began to withdraw and to go to the king secretly.

Thereafter Ge'orgi's side began to grow powerful and Demna's side, to become reduced. For those who went to Ge'orgi were received with great honor and given limitless gifts and [Ge'orgi] promised to give them the entire patrimony and wealth of the Orbeleans [g130].

At this point, when Ge'orgi[']s side] had increased and had grown stronger and [Ge'orgi] realized that the side of his brother's son and Ivane' had contracted, he went against them with great preparation. Now when Ivane' heard about this, he stored all his property in the fortress of Shamshoylte'. Also located there was their treasury, from their ancient ancestors, and an unlimited quantity of goods. [Ivane'] designated the fortress-keepers from the ranks of the chief men. He himself took his troops and the great princes who were with him, and Demna, and went to Lo'r'e' and greatly fortified it. He sent his brother, Liparit, and his two sons to Atabek Eltkuz to request that the latter send him auxiliary troops. King Ge'orgi came and did not find them at Agarak and so he besieged the fortress for 25 days. He captured it, killed the guards, and took all their goods and most of their treasures. Then he came and encamped around Lo'r'e'. Now since Ivane' had entered Lo'r'e' on the 12th [day] of the month of Hrotits' and was still there on the fifth of [the month of] Mehekan, [about six months], the fortress dwellers were in straits and so the *azats* one by one, secretly descended the wall at night and went before the king.

Furthermore, the grandee *didebuls* who were Ivane's dear friends and who shared his views, secretly began to write letters and shoot them attached to arrows into the fortress for Ivane' [g131], so that they come to an agreement and reconcile. For they feared the arrival of Eltkuz. This is what they wrote:

[200]

"Great Ivane' O'rbe'let'si,  
Brave, mighty, invincible,  
You who are of the land of the Chen  
And from the clan of the[ir] king who reigns absolutely,  
You who[se ancestors] came to this land of Georgia  
Where you found unequalled honor  
As the chief and head of the royal House,  
And *spasalar* to Ge'orgi.  
If you value your life and your coveted honor,  
And your limitless patrimony  
Which is more than half the House of Georgia,  
Put aside your earlier vow,  
Your promise and oath to Dawit'.  
Come and submit to Ge'orgi,  
The mighty king of the Georgians.  
Bring and offer a goodly gift,  
Dawit's son, the lad Demna.  
For [that vow] has brought wickedness upon you  
And to many in this land."

Seeing this letter, Ivane' wrote a reply [g132] and tied it to an arrow which was shot outside:

"O, my dear *didebuls*  
You good princes, great and mighty,  
I, Ivane' O'rbe'lets'i,  
Have read your letter of advice,  
But I do not agree with the plan  
You have described in this letter.

The man who is so in love with this life  
That he abandons the Lord's way  
And becomes an oath-breaker  
Receives the lot of an apostate  
And will burn in Hell  
Among the ranks of the demons.  
I, a sinful, mortal man,  
For glory in this transitory life  
Cannot violate an oath I have sworn  
And [cannot] trample on such a formidable vow.  
Rather, I will die for it,  
And go to my desired Lord  
And receive the ineffable treasure  
Which none can steal."

**[201]** Now although [these messages] were written in the Georgian language, I have translated and adapted them into Armenian [g133].

As soon as they realized [Ivane's] unshakable determination, they stepped up the battle. Demna, who had foolishly become frightened, arose in the night, descended the wall, and went to his uncle. He fell on his knees before him, asking only that his life be spared. When the king saw him, he was overjoyed. Then he sent messengers to Ivane', saying: "Why are you fighting and holding a grudge? And for whom are you fighting now? Come to me." [Ivane'] replied: "What you are commanding is correct. Only swear that you will not harm me and not ravish my patrimony and I will come to you." Ge'orgi so swore and made a very grand oath for him. Therefore [Ivane'] dared to go to the king.

Then the king rejoiced greatly and, at first, received him affectionately, glorifying him with grand honors until such time as he had in hand all of [Ivane's] sons and clan members. Then Ge'orgi broke that fearful oath and vow. He seized Ivane' and gouged out his eyes. He seized Demna, who had become a son-in-law to Ivane', gouged out his eyes and castrated him so that, he said, "there will be no heir from him." As for Ivane's younger brother, K'awt'ar, his son, Smbat, and his uncle's [g134] son, Ina, [Ge'orgi] had them slain. Moreover, he wiped out their entire clan, [including] male children and women. Some were drowned, some were thrown over cliffs. Thus was their name obliterated in the House of the Georgians. Furthermore, [Ge'orgi] ordered that [any] remembrance of the line of the Orbeleans be eliminated from their historians as well as from the Church [writings]. And he caused to have written about this uprising not the actual causes of what had transpired, but according to his fancy, by piling on the Orbeleans slander and falsehoods. [Ge'orgi] also designated anathemas so that no one should recall their [Orbelean] name and so that not a single one of them should be left in the land of the Georgians. And he deposited that evil document in his treasury. This occurred in the year 626 [A.D. 1177].

Thus were the dispossessions, persecutions, and killings of the Orbeleans [accomplished] in their native patrimony. From their arrival from the land of the Chen until this point, perhaps more than 1,000 years had transpired. Some accuse them of wanting to take the kingdom for themselves in pursuit of glory. This is completely untrue, like the barking of a dog. Rather, [the uprising] was due to a vow and oath made to King Dawit' for his son, that [the Orbeleans] were willing to die, as is fitting for men who keep their vows and are devoted to their masters. The despoilers and the despoiled [g135] shall be recognized and judged by God at His incorruptible court.

**[202]** Now as for Liparit, Ivane's brother, who had gone to Atabek Eltkuz with his two sons, Elikum and Ivane', he put the House of the Persians on the move and came to the aid of his brother with many cavalry,

some 60,000 men. When he heard the bad news of that wicked happening, he said: "Why should innocent Christians be blamed and why should I go and destroy them? Is our blood debt to be extracted from them?" And so he turned from there and went to Eltkuz, where he stayed, living in bitter anguish and tormented mourning for a few days, after which he died in a foreign land.

His son, Elikum, also remained there, while [Elikum's] brother, Ivane', went to the emir of Gandzak where he stopped, finding much glory and honor there. Subsequently, during the days of T'amar['s rule], with many entreaties and vows they returned [to Georgia] and were given only O'rbe't' from their patrimony. They fathered sons and today are known as O'rbe'lk'. Ge'orgi, through persecution of the O'rbe'lk', had divided their patrimony, giving some of it to their enemies and betrayers, and other parts to a Qipchaq named Xupasar, whom we mentioned earlier. [Ge'orgi] elevated him to the throne of [the Orbeleans'] principality and made [Xupasar] the *spasalar* of all Georgia. However, Ge'orgi himself did not have a [male] heir for the kingdom [g136], only a daughter named T'amar. [Ge'orgi] himself died in the year 633 [A.D. 1189]. His daughter took over the kingdom. They had given to her as a husband a man named Ge'orgi, who was a son of the Russian king.

The latter captured the city of Dvin and then died after a short life. Then T'amar took another husband, a man named Soslan. They had a son named Lasha Ge'orgi. Now after the death of King Ge'orgi, T'amar exalted the sons of Sargis, son of Prince Zak'are', Zak'are' and Ivane', who were of Armenian nationality and Orthodox [Monophysite/anti-Chalcedonian] faith. [T'amar] elevated them in glory and in honor. She established Zak'are' in place of the Orbeleans as *amirspasalar* of the Georgians and gave him their patrimony of Lo'r'e'. [Zak'are's] brother, Ivane', she established as Atabek over the lands of the Armenians and Georgians. With great efforts they took the land of the Armenians from the Persians. They took Aran to inner Basen, and Barkushat as far as Mzhnkert. They took Kars, Vagharshakert, Kaghzvan, Surb Mari, Ani, Anberd, Bjni, and Gar'ni, the metropolitan city of Dvin, Gardman, Gandzak, Ch'are'k', Hert', Shamk'or, Shak'i, Partaw, and Ch'araberd. In the year 660 [A.D. 1211], they took Siwnik', Orotn, Borotam [g137], Bghen, and Barkushat. Although these [areas] were taken in different years, nonetheless, most were captured by them and their sons. And they freed the land from bitter servitude to the Tachiks.

**[203]** The Elikum who had remained in the house of the Atabek found much affection from him and from his sons, P'ahlawan and Xzl Aslan, and in honor and glory they stood higher than all the grandee nobility of the land of the Aryans and Persians. The Atabek gave [to Elikum] the great city of Hamian and styled him his own son. [Atabek Eltkuz] established his patrimony with a written *tughra* and a *manshur* and designated him emir and mayor (*k'aghak'apet*) of the great metropolitan cities of the Persians, Rey and Aspahan and Zazvin, for 12 years. The sultan pressured him to become his son-in-law and receive a large portion of the land and to abandon his faith in Christ. Elikum, although still a youth, was full of genius and would not yield in the matter and would not weaken in the faith. Consequently, he was harassed by the Persians and, concerned that they might force him in matters of the faith, as a pretext requested a place in the district of Naxjawan. He said that that country was nearer to Georgia and "from there it would be simple and easy for me to exact vengeance for the blood of my fathers and brothers [g138]."

The Atabek agreed to this and gave [to Elikum] the fortress of Ernjak, the hamlet of Chahuk, K'alasrah in Naxjawan as well as many other gifts. [Atabek Eltkuz] established [Elikum] as an official and military commander in those parts. Now [Atabek Eltkuz] divided his lands between his two sons, giving Khorasan, Aragh, and the inner portion of Persia to Xizl Aslan, which translates "red lion." He gave to P'ahlawan the upper portions of Persia and Atrpatakan, Aran and Naxjawan. Because of this, [Atabek Eltkuz] took Elikum's hand and put it in his, entreating him: "You be [as] his father and let him be [as] your son." And then [Eltkuz] sent [Elikum] to the city of Naxjawan, with great wealth and remarkable glory.

Elikum came and ruled over that state. He called to him the bishop of Siwnik', Lord Step'annos son of Lord Grigor, and received him with great joy, falling before him and confessing his sins with great repentance. He requested communion and [the bishop] gave it and placed his hand upon him and blessed him. Afterwards Elikum wanted to marry, but did not find among the Christians anyone who suited him to marriage ties, for this land was still under the rule of the Persians. Consequently, [Elikum] accepted marriage ties with [the family of] the [g139] bishop of Siwnik', Lord Step'annos, since from a spiritual perspective, he stood above him. He requested [in marriage] the daughter of [the bishop's] sister who was in Chahuk, since [the bishop's] sister was the wife of a noble and wealthy man among the people of Chahuk, named Abas. The bishop agreed to this with great delight and established family ties, himself giving away to Elikum the beautiful and pious young lady named Xat'un. They had a beautiful little son, who was named Liparit, after [Elikum's] father.

**[204]** [Elikum] thus abode for many days, until one day when he fell gravely ill. When Atabek [Eltkuz] heard about this he came to see him in Chahuk *awan*. Sitting at his bedside, he began to press the sick man, saying: "I have come here so that you give me a great gift." And [Elikum] replied: "O king, order what you want of me or what pleases you and I will give it." [Atabek Eltkuz] said: "I do not seek treasures or any other honor, except that you give up your faith and accept mine." He pressed him greatly. The pitiful [Elikum], harassed and delusional from pain and being pressed by the Atabek, strayed from his reason and replied: "Let it be as you say." Overjoyed by this, the Atabek kneeled before him and then arose and departed. With a great charter written in inviolable terms, he gave [g140] to the little child, Liparit, as hereditary patrimony Chahuk and K'alasrah and 30 shops on the main street in Naxjawan, free and clear of any taxes. However, through the providence of god, Elikum recovered from his afflictions. Then, with great remorse, he went before the sultan and Atabek [Eltkuz] and apostasized Islam. Once again he confessed the true faith of Christ and said: "O my lords, if it is your will, I will remain in my own faith and will serve you with single-minded devotion. Otherwise, I am ready to die for my faith." They, because of the man's great utility, did not press him further. Rather, they left him to his wishes.

After a short while, [Elikum] went along with the Atabek's son to fight in Gandzak. He was slain there. There remained the small child, Liparit, an orphan, with his mother. As soon as the chiefs of the city learned about this, they took the mother and child to Naxjawan and kept them there as hostages, so that the mother not take [the child] and flee. A Muslim forced Xat'un into his house and made her his wife. The child grew up in that house, unfamiliar with Christianity for more than ten years. Now when Zak'are' and Ivane' came to rule over this land, and the House of the Persians had weakened, they began [g141] to inquire if any of Liparit's sons were still alive in Persia. The great bishop of Siwnik', Lord Step'annos, Elikum's father-in-law, informed them that "there is a small child from my sister who is named Liparit, and who is being kept in Naxjawan." Zak'are' and Ivane' were overjoyed at this news and entreated the bishop to devise some means of removing the lad from there. The bishop was well known and much beloved in the House of the Atabek and also among all of his grantees. This was even more so among the folk in Naxjawan. Consequently, the bishop went to a place nearby and spoke with his friends, and with much contrivance he had the lad Liparit and his mother abducted. In the night they descended the wall by a cable, and were taken to Vayots' dzor. The mother was fortified into a certain [secure] place, while the boy was taken before Ivane'. When [Ivane'] saw him, he was filled with an unspeakable joy and he immediately informed T'amar and Lasha who were transported with happiness, since they had been constantly concerned about them.

**[205]** As a result of this, the atabek [Ivane'] gave [Liparit] a grand welcome and covered him with gifts and glory. [Ivane'] wanted to establish marriage relations [with Liparit's family] by marrying him to his sister, T'amt'a. However, a certain great *didebul* named Buba, who was overseer of the entire house of the atabek, tricked them and secretly married [Liparit] [g142] to the most blessed and beautiful young lady, Asp'a, which for a time enraged Atabek Ivane'. Subsequently, by order of the king, in exchange for Liparit's patrimony [the following properties] were given to him in writing in an unbreakable document: Hrashkaber, with its districts and many other villages in Vayots' dzor; E'lar' in Kotayk', with many other villages; Hamasri in

Geghak'uni, with many other villages; in Kayen, Aghstev with its eating. And since he [subsequently] was a leader in the taking of Siwnik' and other fortresses, Siwnik' was also given to him, Orotn, Barkushat, and other fortresses.

King Lasha and Atabek Ivane' designated Liparit as governor of this land. They also designated as governor of the district of Vayots' dzor the other most blessed princes, Vasak Xach'enets'i, father of the Christ-loving and pious *paron* Pr'osh. Through his many great and diligent efforts and his martyrdom for the Christians and the churches, he was blessed and praised by the entire land. May his memory be blessed for all eternity. The most blessed Liparit ruled with the greatest piety. He built a church in Noravank' and adorned and enriched it. [Liparit's] mother practised great asceticism and repentance for many [g143] years in a very narrow cell and then died. She was buried at Noravank' at the door of Surb Karapet. Liparit had five sons: Elikum, Smbat, Ivane', P'axradula, and Tarsayich'.

As for Liparit himself, when he was of middle age, one day, unexpectedly, he was hit by an arrow while he was travelling near the top of a mountain which faces the fortress of Borotn. He reached the fortress at Goloshti vank' and summoned his bishop, Lord Sargis. He died after taking communion and was taken and buried at Noravank', at the door of Surb Karapet, near his mother. His wife and children were left orphaned and without a lord. The handsome Elikum became the son-in-law of Grigor Martsanean of the Mamikonean line. He ruled over his father's lordship. As for the great *aspasalar* Zak'are', he died in the year 661 [A.D. 1212]. Atabek Ivane' lived an additional 15 years, dying in the year 676 [A.D. 1227]. Zak'are's [position of] *spasalar* was taken by his son, Shahanshah, while the *atabekate* went to Ivane's son, Awag. The latter married Gonts'a and ruled his principality for 23 years.

[206]

---

## 66.

***Concerning the nature of the great naxarardom of the Orbeleans; about their coming to this country; and many other writings about diverse events and deeds.***

Now I shall tell you a terrible story. Before this, harassed by the Tatars, the sultan of Khwarezm, Jalal al-Din [Mangubirdi], son of [g144] the Khwarezmshah, moved through Persia. He crossed through Atrpatakan and entered the land of the Armenians. Wherever he went he destroyed, wrecked and ruined, not sparing man or beast. [Jalal al-Din] came to the Araratean district and pitched camp there. Therefore Atabek Ivane' gathered all the power and strength of the Armenians and Georgians and wanted to meet them in battle. Certain men, named Shalue' and Grigor, were set up to watch and notify [the Armenian and Georgian forces about Jalal al-Din's forces]. When they observed the extreme smallness of the troops of Khurasan, they called to and notified our forces, saying: "Advance." However, He Who is Lord of victories, wanting to destroy a people which had become impious and profane, altered what was heard by the ears of those listening such that [the word was] "Flee!" And so [the Caucasian forces] left their equipage and tents there and fled on their horses like madmen, without swords or strength or offering battle. They went over the great cliff in the valley of Gar'ni. All of them fell and died that way with the exception of Atabek Ivane' and ten men who somehow freed themselves and reached Geghe' fortress.

Liparit and those with him found a route and came to his home with all of them, praising the Lord. This occurred in the year 674 [A.D. 1225]. After this [g145] the entire land experienced unprecedented disasters and corrupting events. For when the Khwarezmians saw that our land lacked a ruler, they mercilessly destroyed and took captives, burning down buildings, homes, cities, villages, and monasteries. They burned all the crops and cut down the vineyards and trees. As a result, severe famine was universal. Thick snakes

came crawling into vessels and beds, day and night. Large locusts came and ate up [vegetation] as far as the Ocean sea and, generally, bringing famine to man and beast. And when [the locusts] fell to the ground, their bodies covered the mountains, plains, and valleys. Then came man-eating wolves. Those [folk] who had survived the sword, famine, the snakes [and locusts], died eaten [by wolves].

**[207]** This happened for two reasons: first, because [the animals] had grown used to eating dead bodies; and second, because people had become so weak and exhausted from hunger. Such disasters reigned in our land for seven years. After 11 years the Lord stirred up in the East the nation of archers, who are called Mughalk' or, colloquially, T'at'ars. They come from the land of Chin and Machin beyond Xat'astan, and are godless and faithless people. However, among them a natural law was practised, by which they hated impure vices and all such harmful things. They were right-minded toward each other [g146], sincere, obedient to their leaders, righteous in their conduct and judgements. But they lived poorly, greedily robbing and tormenting people. They are physically very attractive and their faces are hairless, like those of women. They are acquainted with the religion of Christ and greatly love Christians. They are skilled with bow and very clever in all military matters.

Subsequently, however, they abandoned their native ways and the patrimonial code which they had. They adopted the Muhammadan religion and learned all its abominations and irregularities, and began leading disorderly lives. They divided into three parts: one went via the northeast, to the land of the Khazars and Sutaghs, Russians, Cherkiz and Bulghars, and ruled them as far as the border of the Germans and Hungarians, who are Franks. Their leader was named Batu-Khan. The second group went via India and ruled over the greater part of the Indians. They subdued the Uighurs, the Ughuz, Khwarezmians, the Delmik' [Daylemites], taking Alamalex and Be'shapalex, and all those areas. Their chief was Ogedei-Khan. As for the third group, they travelled via the middle of the world, crossing the great Jahan River and through the waters which they themselves call Amumawran. And then, like a stormy whirlwind [g147], they reached our land. Generally, they subdued and ruled everywhere. They overthrew and destroyed all the kingdoms. They took Khurasan and destroyed its major cities: Balkh, Hrew, Hre, Maur, Nishawur, Tus, and Damghan. They took Khuzastan, Lurastan, Parskastan, Kurdestan, and Arabastan. They took Diarbekir, which is Asorestan, Shushtar and Kirman, Baghdad and Basra as far as Hormuz city and the Indian Ocean. They took Atrpatakan, Aran, and Armenia, Georgia, and Byzantium as far as Ancyra and Gangra, Smyrna, Ephesus, Cilicia to the Ocean [Mediterranean] Sea, and to the city of Trabizond by the Pontic [Black] Sea.

**[208]** They took the House of Syria, Urha and Harran as far as Hems and Hama. The first [Mongol generals] to arrive were Chormaghun and Chaghatay, Aslan and Asawur and Ghata-Khan. They took our land in the year 685 [A.D. 1236]. Subsequently there came Hulagu-Khan, grandson of the great Chingiz-Khan, who captured what had been left by the first [commanders]: the city of Baghdad, where he killed the caliph in the year 707 [A.D. 1258], and Mupharghin which he took in the year 708 [A.D. 1259], after a year's siege. Then [Hulagu-Khan] went to Jerusalem. He took Aleppo, which is Beria and De'me'shx, which [g148] is Damascus, and Balbak which is Areg [Heliopolis]. He also took great Antioch, which voluntarily submitted. He took Jerusalem from the Morats'ik' [Egyptians]. In all this, [Hulegu-Khan] displayed immeasurable bravery. Because he greatly loved Christians, all the nations of believers willingly submitted to him and gave him active assistance. For now, this much is sufficient on this topic.

We shall now return to our narration [about Caucasian affairs]. When the Tatars first came to this land of ours, our districts fell to the lot of Aslan *noyin*. Elikum was holed up with his people in the impregnable stronghold of Hrashkaber. Aslan came and circumambulated the fortress and recognized that it was humanly impossible [to enter it]. Therefore, he camped opposite the fortress and sent messengers to him, saying: "Make friendship with us, come to us, and you will receive many good things from us. Otherwise, how long will you sit there on your rock? We shall not leave this land. For God has given it to us as patrimony. And when you do emerge, it will be the ruin of you and of your House."

When Elikum heard this, he did not resist. Rather, he responded sweetly, requesting an oath, and he arose and went before [Aslan] with many gifts. When Aslan saw him, he liked him a lot, receiving [g149] him and making peace. Then, taking him as a guide, he went as far as Ani, subduing everyone. He took Vayots' dzor and Eghegis as far as the village of Erero'n, which is opposite Gar'ni. [Aslan] gave all of this to Elikum and said: "What is taken by the sword and what is purchased with money may both be a man's patrimony. Now, from that which I have taken by my sword I give to you these districts as patrimony for you and your family. Regard us with loyalty and serve the Great Khan who sent us here." [Elikum] served them with great gratitude and with all his heart. Indeed, from that day forth these [territories] were established as patrimony of the House and family of the Orbeleans. Other military commanders subdued other parts of the entire land and brought Awag [Zak'arean] out of the fortress of Kayen. They took the kingdom of Georgia and became the sole rulers of all.

**[209]** Now after a few years the Tatars took the Georgian forces and Awag and Shahanshah and also Elikum and went against the city of martyrs [Martyropolis] which is called Np'rkert. They encamped around it and besieged it with their full army for years and months, but were unable to take it. It was there that Elikum fell gravely ill and, as they say, was poisoned by doctors at Awag's order. When [Elikum] died, they took his body and brought it to [g150] Noravank', where it was placed at the door of [the church of] the blessed Protomartyr. [Elikum] left a son named Burt'e'l, who was very handsome and of robust physique. [Elikum's] principality was ruled by his brother, the most blessed and praiseworthy Smbat, who was endowed with great genius, a powerful thinker, unequalled in intelligence, innovative, eloquent, knowledgeable and capable with languages. He was unbeatable in court since he spoke five languages: Armenian, Georgian, Uighur, Farsi, and even Mongolian.

Schooled since childhood in divine precepts, he had great faith and piety, loved the saints and the Church, was a builder of monasteries, a supporter and comforter of priests, merciful toward the poor, one who restored and empowered the distressed Armenian nation, who retrieved captives and liberated everyone. However, after Elikum's death, the House of Awag [Zak'arean] displayed great jealousy and hostility to the House of the Orbeleans. This was particularly the case with Awag's wife, Gonts'a. They wanted to dispossess, persecute, or destroy the remaining children, Smbat and his brothers. [The Zak'arids] seized their patrimony. [The Orbeleans] circulated about here and there in secret. This aroused the Creator's compassionate love which wanted to raise up and strengthen the House of the Orbeleans by means of Smbat. For in those days [g151] the military commander of the Archers was Bachu-*noyin*, who ruled over everyone like a king. [Bachu] sat in the district of Haband, at the head of Dzage'dzor and had in his hand the young king of Sonk', Dawit'. He was kept in bondage in their army. Through divine providence, he was able to free himself at night and fled with three men. He had with him a very radiant precious gem, a red jewel, which cast rays like a fire and could light up a home like a lantern. [Dawit'] also had with him a fragment of the redeeming wood [of the Cross], and considered [the gem and the fragment] as equal in value to his entire kingdom.

Now it came about that when he was crossing by the head of a village called Guteni, the lord of that village, who was named T'ankre'ghul—that is, "servant of God"—was notified. He was one of Smbat's *azats*. [T'ankre'ghul] mounted a steed and chased after [Dawit']. He caught up with him and prevented him from advancing. As for [Dawit'], in great dread he removed from his breast a small bag, gave it to T'ankre'ghul and asked: "Whose man are you?" And [T'ankre'ghul] replied: "I am Smbat Orbelean's man." Then [Dawit'] said to him: "Take this, give it to Smbat, and say: 'This is worth my kingdom. Take it and keep it. And should I emerge and reign over my land, bring [the bag] to me and I shall give you whatever territory and city you [g152] ask for. And if I do not emerge from the land of Sonk', it will be yours.'" Then [Dawit'] went and entered the land of Sonk', which is secure and difficult of access. Nor did he leave that place until his death.

**[210]** T'ankre'ghul in great delight brought that jewel to his home and, after keeping it for a few days, gave it to Smbat. The latter took it and praised God. He reasoned with himself: "If I keep this, it will bring me harm,

since it cannot be concealed and will not remain among us. Rather, I shall take this to the Great Khan who is the king of kings, who rules over land and sea and who is called Manku (Mongke)-Khan—which means "white king"—who is the grandson of Chingiz-Khan. I will request from him mercy for this land." [Smbat] arose and went to Bachu-*noyin*, showed him the radiant gem and said: "Either take this and grant me what I seek, or else send me to the Great Khan so that I may give it to him." [Bachu] saw him and was astonished, and he replied: "That is a most precious and priceless jewel. I dare not take it. Rather, I will send you to the great world-conquering Khan." Then he saw to preparations for the journey, providing what was needed and gave [to Smbat] some of his own men as support. Then he sent Smbat to Chin and Machin, to the land of the Archers, where the senior throne of their kingdom is located, to Mongke-Khan, son of Guyuk-Khan [g153], son of Chingiz-Khan, their first king.

Smbat had circulated around [visiting] our monasteries, which were enduring bitter taxation. He had prayers recited in evening services and entrusted himself to the saints. He swore a vow that should he return successfully, all the priests would be freed from taxes, all the churches would receive gifts, and all their stolen patrimonies would be returned. And thus, fortified by the prayers of many people, he went on his journey. After crossing vast distances during his long journey, he arrived in an eastern country at the throne of the world-ruling Khanate, [in the city] called Qaraqorum. Since Mongke-Khan was a legitimate Christian, he had at his great palace a church and priests who were continually offering mass and services without interruption. [Mongke-Khan] himself greatly loved Christians, who were called *ark'ayun*, and the entire land practised Christianity.

First Smbat saw all the grandees and court nobility whom he informed of his reason for coming. They took him into the presence of the Great Khan and presented the precious gem. [Mongke-Khan] was delighted with it and praised it. Then he asked: "What nation do you belong to?" And [Smbat] replied: "By faith, I am Christian, and [g154] by nationality, Armenian." Therefore [the Khan] liked him even more and asked the reason for his arrival. Then [Smbat] related everything to him—the harassment of the churches, his own deprivation, the faithfulness of his brother toward Aslan-*noyin*, and everything concerning the affairs of the land. [Mongke-Khan] greatly approved of [Smbat] and accepted his statements [as accurate]. Then [Mongke-Khan] entrusted Smbat to his mother, named Suraxt'ambe'k, saying: "Let us keep this particular *ark'ayun* for ourselves and not allow anyone else to rule over him." And they designated him *inju*, that is, "belonging to a lord." They ordered him to remain at court for some days and entrusted him to officials to provide him with a daily stipend from the court. [Smbat] remained there for three years, nor did he cease praying, day and night.

[211] Now it happened that Smbat had with him a very small fragment [of the Cross] which worked miracles. One night he placed this before him in his tent and prayed imploringly in front of it with his arms outstretched, shedding copious tears, and sighing from evening until dawn. And then, behold, a radiant arc of light appeared in the sky over his tent, with a cross above the arc from which fiery rays of light shone forth. This intense light flooded the entire expanse of the camp [g155], and everyone, frightened by what they had seen, rushed to take the news to the door of the royal court. The monarch was informed and came outside to see. In great amazement [Mongke-Khan] glorified and thanked God. He summoned one of his advisors, a Christian of Assyrian nationality, and said to him: "Go and mark that tent and in the morning find out whose it is." Meanwhile, Smbat himself was ignorant of all these happenings.

At dawn they summoned him to the king who asked: "Is he still here?" And they replied: "Yes." Then [Mongke-Khan] asked Smbat: "What was it that we saw over your tent last night?" Frightened, [Smbat] replied: "I have no idea." Then the king of kings said: "You have no idea about such flashings of light and such an awe-inspiring apparition which lasted for such a long time?" Smbat responded: "My God knows that I do not know about it." Then the Khan inquired: "What do you have with you of your holy things?" Smbat said: "I have nothing but a small relic." [The Khan] said: "Bring it to me so that I may see it." [Smbat] fetched it at once. Then the king arose and descended from the throne. Bare-headed, he kneeled, kissed it, and said:

"This is the same size and shape as the luminous cross we saw. Indeed, it is the same." Thereafter he so loved and honored and trusted Smbat that [Smbat] rose above [g156] all the nobles at court. And [Mongke-Khan] ordered that Smbat be given whatever he asked for.

They gave him a golden *p'ayizay*, which is a tablet bearing the name of God and of the king, and which is their greatest honor. They also wrote a *ear'lex*, which is an order and which we call a *sige'l* ("charter"), giving [to Smbat] everything which Aslan had captured by the sword, and Orotn with its country which had been taken by Bachu and his grandees, and the fortress of Borotn with its eating, for the slaying of his father, Liparit, at that place as the price of his blood. Moreover, they removed Smbat from all the *dawt'ars* ("property registers") of the Georgians and others. This constituted the second confirmation of their [Orbelean] patrimony. For the first [such confirmation] was as servants with land taken by Aslan-*noyin* with the sword. The second [confirmation] was that which was given by the king as the price of the precious, radiant gem. He received an order to free all the churches and priests of the Armenians. Thus, in magnificent splendor, [Smbat] departed from the royal court. They quickly came and reached our land. Then peace dawned here like the sun piercing the night. First, [Smbat] presented himself to Bachu and the other chiefs. He received additional assistance from them, taking and clearing the entire Orotan country as far as the border of Borotn and [g157] Bghen, [territory] on which was located Tat'ev, the half-ruined see of Siwnik'.

[212] In addition, [Smbat] took Eghegis and the entire district of Vayots' dzor, P'oghahan, Urts and Ve'gi with its valley as far as Ererawn, and many cultivated places and hamlets in Kotays and Geghak'uni. He freed the churches and the priests of his principality and in the entire land of the Armenians. He [re]built monasteries and all the ruined churches and did much to delight the Christians. Now the [ecclesiastical] throne of Siwnik' had been in ruins for a long time. Bishop Lord Yovhanne's had grown old. His brother's son, Lord Hayrapet, at the order of the wife of Bachu had begun to rebuild the monastery, and dwelled there in poverty. For, despite all the legacies, there remained not a single house for the church. Once Smbat had made this his own, he began directing all efforts toward rebuilding and enriching the church. One by one he returned to it the legacies which had been ravished.

Now while matters stood this way, Satan, the hater of good, began to stir up envy and to enflame the House of Awag and the grandees of the Georgians. Awag had died in the year 699 [A.D. 1250]. His wife, Gonts'a, had a daughter named Xoshak', and ruled over his entire [g158] patrimony. As a result, they assembled in Tiflis near Arghun, who had been designated vizier and *basqaq* over the entire land by the great Khan—that is to say, supreme commander, and [the official] responsible for the [collection of the] royal taxes and the great divan. It was he who conducted a census of the entire land in the year 703 [A.D. 1254]. With many bribes they sought Smbat's destruction and that he not inherit his country. Although Arghun did not dare to effect this, nonetheless, they took away many places from Smbat and they fiercely obstructed the remainder. For this reason [Smbat] again was obliged to go to Mongke-Khan. He took auxiliaries from the house of Aslan-*noyin* and departed with the aid of God. However, prior to [Smbat's] departure, Arghun had been summoned to court over some treachery. When [Smbat] arrived, Arghun was there in chains, while a certain Sewinch-*beg* and Sharap'adin of the treasury of that country wanted to kill Arghun and come and take over his position. Sewinch-*beg* was an enemy of Smbat's and treacherously wanted to kill him.

However, when Smbat reached the palace and was in the presence of Mongke-Khan, the latter recognized him. Moreover, since he liked Smbat and believed him, [Mongke-Khan] called him forth, saying: "Approach, *ark'ayun*, and acquaint [g159] me with all the goings on in that land and among my troops." [Smbat] related these things in turn. Then he was asked about Arghun: how he had ruined that land, hanged the priests and even killed one of them himself. Smbat replied, vindicating Arghun and completely denying the accusers. The Khan was enraged at his grandees over this, and why they had not investigated accurately. He commanded that a tribunal should be held and an examination conducted with Smbat's participation. This was convened on the next day. When Smbat disproved [Arghun's accusers], Sewinch and Sharap'adin were put to death at

once. Moreover, Arghun was removed from his fetters and brought before the king who exalted him and gave him back his former job. Taking Smbat by the hand, [Mongke-Khan] entrusted him [to Arghun] and commanded that a completely new decree should be written with even greater provisions than before, which confirmed Smbat's inheritance. Thus, with great success, Smbat arose and left, along with Arghun. They quickly came to this land of ours. Because of the extent of his gratitude, Arghun did not know how he could sufficiently honor Smbat.

**[213]** When Smbat arrived, all his enemies and adversaries were shamed. He ruled over all his districts and villages. However, subsequently, voluntarily, for friendship and unity [g160] he returned this or that village or field. The remainder he confirmed as the private patrimony of his clan and children. Smbat's first trip to Mongke-Khan took place in the year 700 [A.D. 1251], while the second trip occurred in 705 [A.D. 1256]. [Smbat] was covered with great glory and loved by Hulegu-Khan, and placed in charge of many of the latter's works. [Smbat] built a marvellous chapel at Noravank', above their own cemetery. At great expense, he also enriched and beautified the church, giving it villages and vineyards, as we mentioned earlier. [Smbat] went to Basen, at Hulegu's order, to see about acquiring pine timber to construct a great palace in the plain of Dar', which they call Aladagh. He came to Ashorni and went to the monastery of T'at'ul where, after spending much money and expending great effort, he acquired a fragment of the head of the holy Illuminator, Gregory, since one side of his head was located there. Furthermore, he acquired the skull of Saint Gregory the Wonderworker (*sk'anch'elagorts*) [Thaumaturgus], which had been brought and deposited there in a reliquary by the last king, Gagik Bagratuni, during a time of destruction. [Smbat], bringing with him these indescribable divine treasures, had them adorned with gold and silver and placed in an oblong repository which then was housed at the renowned convent of Noravank'. He also had constructed [g161] a repository of gold for [a fragment of] the Senior Holy Cross, having an oblong shape with opening doors. On the back of it he wrote a memorial of himself.

In these days [Smbat's] brother, the beautiful flower Ivane, died and was buried alongside Elikum. [Ivane'] left a son, the good-natured Liparit. After a short while [Smbat's] other brother, the brave combatant P'axradula, also died and was buried among the others. Their brother's son, Burt'e'l, went with Hulegu's forces to war against Berke-Khan in the plain of the Khazars, now called Qipchaqs. By the great river called Terek (T'erg), he was slain in battle, in the year 710 [A.D. 1261]. After this their most blessed mother, Asp'ay, died in the year 712 [A.D. 1263] and was buried with her children. There remained to help Smbat only his younger brother, Tarsayich, who was a powerful military man, successful in all endeavors as well as being devout and extremely pious. [Tarsayich] took as a wife Aruz *khatun*, who was a Muslim daughter of the lord of Siwnik'. She became a Christian, full of devotion and fear of God. She bore three sons: Elikum, Step'annos [the author of this work], who was called to the episcopacy, and P'axradula. Tarsayich ruled the Orotan area [g162].

**[214]** [Tarsayich] adorned the great church at Tat'ev with vessels and beautiful garments and returned to the church legacies which long since had been shorn away: Harzhis, with its borders; Ts'ur, with its borders; a vineyard which he himself had planted in Xotaget; and K'e't'ivan, with its borders. Then he wrote an inscription in his own memory on a pillar in the south, which had this content:

"This inscription and monument is an imperishable memorial to myself, Tarsayich, Prince of Princes, son of the great Liparit, brother of Smbat the great prince, governor of this state whose districts I ruled over from the gate of Barkushat as far as the border of Bjni. I joined to the church of the Holy Apostles at Tat'ev and voluntarily gave to this blessed church as my soul's portion and from my own holdings six villages which I learned had belonged to it from ancient times as legacies: Shnhe'r, the hamlet of Xot with its borders, mountain, and field, the vineyards which I myself planted in Xotaget and Xot, Ts'ur and Harzhik' with their borders, half of which were purchased with money, Borti, K'et'ivank' with their borders. The bishop of this place, Lord Soghomon [and Lord Hayrapet] confirmed and designated in our memory forty annual services: ten on the day of the

Epiphany, ten on Easter, ten on the feast of the Mother of God, ten on the senior feasts [g163], twenty days for myself, Tarsayich, and twenty days for my brother, Smbat.

Now, after our passing, should anyone—either from our own folk or foreigners, princes or tax officials (*dzer'naworats'*)—try to invalidate these firm provisions and unbreakable resolutions, or think to take from this church the villages or vineyards, may such a one share the lot of Judas and the other crucifiers, and receive the same punishment as Cain and all evildoers, and be anathematized by the three holy councils. Should seniority pass to a Tachik and should he try to ravish [the properties], may he be cursed by God and by his prophet and descend into Hell with Satan. May his house and children be destroyed and disappear, may his *halal* ("legitimate") turn to *haram* ("forbidden") and may three times a thousand curses (*nalat*) be upon him. Done in the year 723 [A.D. 1274], on November 13th.

Witnesses to this deed are: Lord Sargis, bishop of Noravank', Sargis, turnkey of the blessed church; from my *azats* Hasan, son of Karapet; Orotshah, grandson of Lora; Miran, son of Nuer. [This deed] is true by the will of God. May God favor this holy monastery. I, Tarsayich, trusting in God, confirm these donations with my signature. Now after me, should my children or grand children, or whoever rules think to deny my soul the object of my hope, or try to abolish what we have stipulated, may they be anathematized by the 318 patriarchs in life and in death, may they be abandoned, and expunged from this life and the next. Amen."

[215] Now since Smbat was the adopted father of Awag's House, he consulted with the other princes. They had Gonts'a drowned in the sea, at Hulegu-Khan's order. Then [Smbat] himself ruled over all Awag's principality. He gave [Awag's] daughter, Xoshak', in marriage to the great Xoja, the *sahip diwan* who held in his hand all the lands under the sway of Abagha-Khan. It is said that according to the great *dawt'ar* ("register"), there were 150,000 *dumans*, each *duman* composed of 10,000. Xoja was the head of the *diwan* and the supervisor of everything. This was in the year 718 [A.D. 1269]. However, the great and pious king of the world, the hope and expectation of the Christians, Hulegu-Khan, died in the year 713 [A.D. 1264]. With him died the most blessed Tonghuz-Khatun, his wife. They were poisoned by the crafty Xoja *sahip*. God knows that they were no less pious than [the Byzantine emperor] Constantine and his mother, Helena. They reigned for eight years [Hulegu-Khan, 1256-1265].

Then [Hulegu's] son, Abagha, sat on the throne in his stead. He was a good, mild, and peace-loving man, and a lover of Christians. He successfully ruled the Khanate [g165] for 18 years [Abagha-Khan, 1265-1281]. He died in Hemian in the year 731 [A.D. 1282], through the treachery of some people. Now as Smbat was childless, he took one of the sons of his brother, Tarsayich, [the author, Step'annos], and adopted him, providing him with an education and training for the priesthood. [Smbat] constructed many buildings, and monasteries and churches, very great and noteworthy, surpassing all his forebears. Then he went to Tavre'zh *shahastan*, to Arghun and the *Sahip* at the royal divan. There he fell ill with a severe ailment from which he died. Having given his entire principality to his brother, Tarsayich, he entrusted him to Arghun and to the *Sahip*. Then he departed [this life] in a chariot of angels, the venerable and blessed priest, Shalue', being nearby. [Smbat] had ruled his patrimony with the greatest honor and glory for 20 years.

All the grandees came and wept over him and greatly adorned his coffin with royal splendor. Surrounded by crosses, torches, and candles, with many priests loudly singing and astonishing the populous capital, the bier was lifted up and taken through the [city] gates. It was brought to the patrimonial mausoleum at the blessed monastery of Noravank'. [Smbat] was buried with solemn reverence [g166] in a tomb along with his fathers in the year 722 [A.D. 1273]. Therefore his brother, Tarsayich, constructed a mausoleum for him and a church named after Saint Gregory and transferred there his brother, Smbat, as his resting place. May Christ God, the hope of our people, grant him peace and mercy and clean his soul of all defilement and group him among the

blessed and glorious princes of the Armenians. May his memory be blessed. Hear now what services [Smbat] rendered to his people.

At this time, the kingdom of the Georgians was under [the rule of] a woman named Rusudan. There was a son of Lasha, named Dawit', whom Rusudan had tried to destroy in diverse ways. [For example,] she had him put into a box and tried to drown him in the sea; she gave him to the princes to kill, [but] they kept him in an underground room; she sent him to distant lands to die there. But [Dawit'] freed himself from all this, through the care of God. He fled to the great king, Mongke-Khan, returned to rule over his lands, and found that Rusudan had perished. He married Esugan-Xawand of Naxjawan. Then he took as a second wife Gonts'a, who bore him a son, Demetre'. Smbat, in all faithfulness [g167] served him, and showed many acts of kindness toward him in the presence of Hulegu-Khan and the grandees, and even more so at the great court. King Dawit' so loved [Smbat] that he considered him as his equal and entrusted his young son, Demetre', to him as his own son. Smbat had many enemies of [Dawit's] kingdom among the insolent grandees put to death at the royal court. For Hulegu so heeded him that whomever he wanted could be put to death, and whomever he chose could be granted life. For everyone trembled [from fear] of him, and every eye looked to him.

[216]

---

## 66.

***Concerning the nature of the great naxarardom of the Orbeleans; about their coming to this country; and many other writings about diverse events and deeds.***

The king called Smbat to Tiflis and wanted to demonstrate his gratitude with very grand gifts. [King Dawit'] asked [Smbat]: "What would you like me to give you as a very great present, since whatever pleases you in my kingdom I will give to you unstintingly." Smbat rose to his feet and then knelt before him, saying: "O King, everything that we possess is yours and your ancestors'. This is sufficient for us. But there is one issue between us which you could resolve if you so desire." The king replied: "I swear that whatever you ask for, I will grant to you." Smbat said: "Eliminate that wicked memory by which your predecessor, Ge'orgi, insulted my ancestors. He wrote a decree and so cursed [the Orbeleans] that we would not be allowed [g168] our patrimony. And he kept this [document] in his treasury. Put that in my hand." The astonished king cursed his grandfather for driving away from his House such brave and competent people. [King Dawit'] ordered his attendants to search for and find the book. They went and found it and brought it at once. The king took it in hand, stood up, and said: "Behold, Smbat, take the book you requested." Smbat arose, then knelt and said: "O King, since you have been so merciful, complete your kindness to me. Since that document was written by a king's hand, it should be destroyed by a king's hand. Command that a fire be lit before you, and throw the book into it, with your own hand."

The king immediately so ordered, and a fire was lit there. Taking his sword, he cut the pages and threw them into the fire where they burned. Smbat was overjoyed by this and greatly thanked him. After this, and after receiving from the king many grand gifts and royal clothing, he was thus sent home. Behold, in this fashion did Smbat remove the insults done to his ancestors, and thus did he leave a good memorial to himself for the future. Now after him, his brother, Tarsayich, ruled over all his realm. He was honored [g169] and loved by the rulers and all the grandees, and thus did he rule over his principality with lofty and magnificent glory, feared by all enemies. So honored was he by Abagha-Khan that on many occasions the latter removed his own royal garments and dressed Tarsayich in them from head to toe, and put around [Tarsayich's] waist a belt of pure gold adorned with precious stones and pearls. He was a powerful, hearty, and very tall military man, who displayed the greatest bravery and undefeatable strength in every battle he entered—in Khurasan, Syria, Byzantium, in Hama and Hems, fighting against the Egyptians, and at Darband. Nine times he himself led and

waged the battle, for which he received very grand gifts from the king of kings. He also received a golden *balish* which was flat, the shape of a palm, and weighing a *liter*. For such, indeed, was the honor of victory.

[217] [Tarsayich] took Dawit', the king of the Georgians, to the House of Xach'en, to the son of the great Prince Jalal Atabek and married [King Dawit'] to [Jalal's] sister, Mina-khatun, during the lifetime of his first wife. This was against the laws of the Church and displeasing to the *vardapets*. Bringing her to his home, he had a beautiful son from her [g170], whom he named Jalal. [Mina-khatun] also bore two daughters, the elder of whom was given in marriage to the great and glorious prince of Xach'en, Grigor, son of Hasan, son of the great Grigor, who was the son of Atabek Ivane's sister. The other [daughter], after the father's passing, her brothers gave as a wife into the House of the king of the Georgians, marrying her to King Dawit's brother, Manue'l, a son of King Demetre', who was the son of King Dawit', who had died in the year 719 [A.D. 1270].

[Tarsayich] built churches and did many good things for the monasteries. To the monastery at Ts'aghatsk'ar, he gave the village of Gar'naker in Geghak'uni and a village in Machr'ak valley. He himself wrote an inscription that was placed on [the wall of the church of] Saint Karapet. He stipulated that three masses should be offered each year [in his memory] and reinforced [the stipulation] with frightful curses, so that the terms of this spiritual gift would not be violated. He rennovated many old and ruined churches. In those days there died [Tarsayich's] pious wife, Aruz-khatun. She was buried at the door of [the church of] the Holy Apostles at Tat'ev. Now after the reign of Dawit', Tarsayich had brought [Dawit's] son, Demetre', into his own House and raised him, as his father had requested. With great effort and assistance [from Tarsayich], [Demetre'] was seated on the throne of his father as king of the Georgians, in the year 721 [A.D. 1272]. Now after Abagha, who died in the year 731 [A.D. 1282] [g171], there was seated as khan over the entire world T'agutar [Abagha's] brother's son. He called himself Ahmad and thought to destroy the Christian faith and make all peoples Muslim. In the third year of his reign [Teguder, 1281-1284] in Mughan he killed his other brother, Ghawnghrat'ay, and the Sultan of Rum, Qiyath ad-Din, and the two sons of Ts'agan. Then in the springtime he went to Khurasan with a vast army against Arghun, son of Abagha-Khan, to kill the heir of the kingdom. He seized him and turned back.

But that night the God of the Christians inclined the souls of the grandees toward Arghun, such that they removed him from fetters in prison and made him king. Putting swords to work, they killed all of his enemies. Then they came upon and killed Ahmad and those who shared his views: Hasan Manli Sheikh, the *Sahip diwan*, Alinakh, and many others. With [the partisans of Arghun] were King Demetre', whom Arghun liked, and to whom he gave the entire land of the Armenians, the House of Awag, the House of Shahanshah, and the Gage's, and the son of Atabek Sadun. [Arghun] himself loved the Christians and the churches very much. Among them was Tarsayich, whom Arghun greatly exalted and loved. Then Demetre' turned back [g172] with great joy and with all the *azats* and grandees of the Georgians and Armenians with him. Arriving in Sharur, Tarsayich went before him and exalted the king with very great honors and regal gifts. [King Demetre'] took him along and went to Ayrarat, Awag's country where, by dint of great entreaties, he obliged [Tarsayich] to become Atabek over all his lordship, as far as Tiflis, Ani, and Kars. And [the king] gave his sons, Dawit' and Manue'l, into his hands for him to raise and to keep them.

[218] Thereafter, Tarsayich held the atabekate of the land of the Armenians, and great ease and mercy came to the harassed Armenian people. Going to Tiflis, he had the royal divan fetched and read all the registers (*dawt'ars*). For in them were recorded the names of the Armenian monasteries, since they were under taxation and subject to the divan. Then [Tarsayich] had summoned the senior secretary of the treasury. He changed the register, removing the names of more than 150 monasteries. Then he burned the old [register] in the fire. Thus all the churches were freed. He was blessed and revered by everyone, to the point that in the village of Netis, by the banks of the Hurazdan River, they erected a cross and named it after him [g173].

[Tarsayich] convened a solemn assembly of many bishops and *vardapets* and monastics in the most glorious monastery of Noravank' and had his son, Step'annos [the author], ordained to the priesthood in the year 729 [A.D. 1280]. After five years, he sent [Step'annos] to the Armenian kingdom of Cilicia, to the great *kat'oghikos* Lord Yakob [Yakob/Hakob I Klayets'i, 1268-1286] for ordination into the episcopacy. When he arrived there, the *kat'oghikos* had died. [Step'annos] was received with much honor and great splendor by Lewon [III, 1269-1289], king of the Armenians, who greatly entreated him to remain there and occupy the throne of the *kat'oghikosate* of the Armenians. [Step'annos] did not consent to this. And so they held a great assembly and, after much deliberation, on Easter eve, they elected as *kat'oghikos* of the Armenians, Lord Kostandin [II Katukets'i, 1286-1289]. On the great feat of Easter, they ordained Step'annos as metropolitan of the great see of Siwnik', over all the other bishops here and there, some in Vayots' dzor, some in Tat'ev, who unanimously had sent [Step'annos] with letters and gifts to the *kat'oghikos* for the restoration of the ancient honor and rank of this holy see, [whose prerogatives] had long since been eliminated due to the ruination and destruction of our land.

Thus crowned, Step'annos became [g174] married to this see located, at the holy and apostolic church at Tat'ev. They also wrote in eloquent language a circulating letter in golden letters on parchment, which confirmed the renewal of the dignity of the see of the metropolitanate. Furthermore, they enhanced the incomparable glory of the occasion by clothing him in patriarchal vestments, woven with gold thread. They placed a revered crown on his head. This was [sent] from the *kat'oghikos*. The king, similarly, dressed [Step'annos] in royal garments suitable for a patriarch, and a second time placed on his head a revered crown of pure gold, which they call a mitre. They also gave him a pallium with six [crosses ?], which metropolitans have, a diadem, woven with gold thread and adorned with pearls, and many other very grand gifts. And thus, with the greatest honor, they sent him back in the year 736 [A.D. 1287].

**[219]** When [Step'annos] arrived his father, Tarsayich, his brothers, and the entire land rejoiced. However, after a short while, some bishops at Tat'ev became disgruntled and went to the foreigners, formenting many crims and bringing great sorrow to the Church. Until the deaths of two of them, Lord Hayrapet and Lord Yovhanne's, the disputes and commotion did not cease. Now Lord Step'annos went [g175] to the great governor Arghun, showed him the *kat'oghikos'* letter, and acquainted him with all the developments. [Arghun] received him with the greatest honor and was well pleased. He ordered that they write for [Step'annos] after their custom, a *yarlex*, and confirmed [the status of] all the churches and the land and the episcopacy of Lord Step'annos. [Arghun] gave him a man from the court and a *p'ayiza*. And thus was [Step'annos] sent to his see. When he arrived, he ruled over all, to the glory of God. Under him, in obedience, there were Lord Grigor, who was a relative of Lord Yovhanne's, and Lord Sargis at Noravank'. This Lord Sargis, as we mentioned earlier, had accomplished many good things at Noravank'. He accomplished another noteworthy construction: at the village of Ar'p'ay, he built an amazing bridge of dressed stone over the river, making it extremely high and wide. It astonished beholders. [This bridge], which was built at great cost and great labor, was done at the command of the pious and glorious Prince Tarsayich. May Christ reward him a thousandfold.

In that period, the forces of Arghun-Khan splintered. There was great confusion among the senior grandees, for Arghun had seized the great military commander [g176] Bugha Chingizean, who was called senior among seniors or lord among lords. [Arghun] killed him, since he thought [that Bugha and his partisans] were planning treachery. [Killed] along with him were all his sympathizers: the thousands Ghazan and T'uxlux, Arux, Awchan and many others. Among them was Demetre', the king of the Georgians, who was baselessly slandered and sentenced to death. He was taken to the great plain of Movkan by the banks of the Kura River and killed in the year 738 [A.D. 1289]. Now the Christ-loving and most blessed Prince of Princes Tarsayich, after many pious and noteworthy deeds, completed the term of his life and died in his palace at Ar'p'ay. He was taken to Noravank' in a large solemn crowd [of mourners] and placed along with his brother, Smbat, in the mausoleum he had built, in the year 739 [A.D. 1290]. Now his sons disputed over their father's lordship and principality and so they went to the royal court where, in the presence of the world-conquering Arghun-

Khan, they familiarized him with their dispute. [Arghun] called forth the most senior Elikum and designated him, in his father's place, as prince over all.

[220] Despite the fact that [Elikum] ruled over the entire patrimony and principality of his father, nonetheless, he did not want to deprive [g177] his brothers. Rather, with bishops, *vardapets*, and *azats* he divided up the entire inheritance and gave appropriate portions to his brother, Jalal, and to his father's brothers' son, Liparit. Thus did they dwell in unity and rule the lordship of this state greatly respected and in glorious authority, revered and exalted in the eyes of the common folk and the grandees. They kept this land in peace and they kept the monasteries in a flourishing condition. Now because in this period the whole land was ruined and corrupted and worship had been obstructed in the monasteries, everyone universally applied to this lordship [Siwnik'], finding a haven here. [Among the applicants were] the *kat'oghikos* of the Aghuans, Lord Step'annos, who came and dwelled with his [spiritual] brother Lord Step'annos [the author], many other bishops, *vardapets*, and *azats*. By the grace of God, this House was a sight to behold, like unto Noah's ark amidst the world-destroying waves. May the Lord God, through the intercession of the Mother of God and all the saints, keep [this land] unshaken until the end of the world.

How beautiful they made it here. For they made it gleam through their physical authority, while [g178] their brother, Lord Step'annos, beautified it with spiritual favor through his high spiritual authority. With their deep love for each other, the two [brothers] lived in tranquility, recalling the [Biblical] words "how good and pleasant when brothers dwell together." They bore children like blossoms: Elikum had two sons, named Burt'e'l and Bughta, and a daughter, who was given in marriage to the handsome prince, the great governor E'ach'i, son of Hasan, son of the great Prince Pr'osh, who was the son of Vasak the brave, whom we mentioned earlier.

As for Liparit, he had five sons. The eldest, Smbat, became a son-in-law to the House of Atabek Saduneants'. Another son, Yovhanne's, was taken, nourished, and educated by Lord Step'annos. He entered the priesthood.

Dear reader, do not criticize this author for flattering the pride of his own family or imagine that he exaggerated or embellished his account. The Lord is my witness that from the beginning of our narration until its conclusion we have sought the truth and told it after extensive examinations. As for what we ourselves were eyewitness to, we have presented here a small and accurate portion out of many events. Just as we have diligently and accurately presented the genealogies and memorials of other [Houses] from early times, we have been even more solicitous [g179] [of the truth] regarding our own [House]. In this book I have set forth an account of the land of Sisakan. As the sons of the Orbeleans came to rule here as lords, it was necessary that I should tell their story too. Accept this [history] without reservation, and do not fault us. Glory forever. Amen.

[221]

---

## 67.

***In memory of the God-crowned king of the Armenians, Lewon, and his joining the blessed and heavenly see of Siwnik', at the hands of Lord Hayrapet, bishop of Siwnik'.***

The honored and revered old man, Lord Hayrapet, bishop of Siwnik', after construction work at the blessed congregation of Tat'ev, rebuilt the worn and decayed roof of the holy church which had become ruined, from an earthquake and from its great age. He had highly skilled craftsmen, using dressed stones and cement, rebuild the gaps in the dome and its crooked lower parts, as well as the roofing on the portico at the door. While cleaning the old building with its mixed stone and brick portions, high up near the ceiling on the north

side on a pillar over the first altar they found [g180] a cache containing a great number of holy objects, including relics of Apostles, patriarchs, and martyrs. Among them was the Babgenian cross [a fragment of the True Cross], which had received God [upon it]. With great thanksgiving they lowered [these relics] down into the church. There was indescribable joy among the brotherhood.

Subsequently, after many days, the virtuous elderly bishop, Lord Hayrapet, conquered by the love of his Lord, went to visit the places in Jerusalem where God had walked. After achieving the desire of his virtuous soul, [Bishop Hayrapet] visited the God-crowned king of the Armenians, Lewon [III, 1269-1289]. [King Lewon] had long since wanted to join the brotherhood of the blessed and sublime monastery of Tat'ev, and so he was overjoyed to meet the bishop. As a devout Christian, he prepared some royal gifts for the holy and heavenly church: altar coverings made of imperial Byzantine silk, beautifully embroidered by Greek workers; a cross white and glittering like ice with precious stones and mounted in gold; honorable chalices made of pure silver, as well as many other gifts for the bishop. With his own hand, [the king] wrote this memorial to himself [g181]:

"People who have glimpsed undying life with eyes of the Spirit while in their bodies, have sought spiritual salvation.

I, Lewon, king of the Armenian people, confessing the true faith in the Holy Trinity, asked to join this blessed convent, to participate in some way in all the good it has done.

I beseech you, the blessed folk who reside [there]

In your prayers ask for the remission of my sins and those of my ancestors, resting in the hope of resurrection

That we may be made worthy of rest in the Heavenly Kingdom.

And with them may my sons, descendants, and successors enjoy in this world long life and prosperity.

[Done] in 731 of the Armenian Era [A.D. 1282]" [g182].

During the episcopate of Siwinik' of Lord Hayrapet and Lord Yovhanne's, the mighty and pious king of the Armenians, who reigned in the western state of Cilicia, with the greatest hopes and generous gifts became a member of the monastic brotherhood [of Tat'ev] as the words above make clear. Now those who come to reside in this holy place of prayer and virtue after us, accept the benevolent King Lewon of the Armenians as a communicant and always remember him when praying to our eternally blessed Lord Savior. Because of the aspirations and love of the God-empowered king, we have designated in this convent that in his memory mass should be said on the holy day of Easter Sunday in all the churches without interruption, for all eternity.

---

[222]

## 68.

***Regarding the kat'oghikosate of the Armenians after Lord Yakob and the diverse circumstances and captivity they experienced; about Hr'omklay and the monastic complexes of the Franks by the coast.***

After the [passing of the] blessed *kat'oghikos* of the Armenians, Lord Yakob [I, Klayets'i, 1268-1286], with great solemnity and in a large assembly [g183], they seated as *kat'oghikos* of the Armenians in the senior

church of the Holy Sophia in Sis, *Vardapet* Kostandin [II Katukets'i, 1286-1289], who was director of the blessed and renowned retreat called Xorin. [The ordination ceremony] was conducted with great splendor and royal wealth at the hands of the king of the Armenians, Lewon, son of Het'um. Our lowly self [Step'annos Orbelean] was present there. When [Kat'oghikos Kostandin] had occupied the [ecclesiastical] throne for three years, King Lewon died and his senior son, Het'um, inherited his lordship. [King Het'um] conceived a dislike for Kat'oghikos Kostandin and had for supporters the chief bishops, lords, and even *vardapets*. Having charmed all of them with his treacherous counsel, [King Het'um] convened an assembly in the capital Sis and brought forward his malicious informers. The latter piled up many groundless slanders against the patriarch, which are unworthy and inappropriate for an audience. Servants became judges of their lords; sheep, of their shepherd. And thus did they sit in judgement against this representative of God Who alone knows what the truth of the matter was.

[The *kat'oghikos*], meek and mild, according to the Lord's precepts, welcomed it all without flinching, and said: "Your words are true. Truly I did those things. But these are only the things revealed [g184]. As for the unrevealed and secret things, there are a thousand more of them hidden in the recesses of my soul, known only to Him Who knows about secrets. I am unworthy of this position. Do with me as you chose." The king and the assembly replied: "Remove [the symbols of] the *kat'oghikosate* from yourself and give them to us." Hearing this, the *kat'oghikos* gladly agreed. He was at the time wearing a patriarchal vestment, decorated with five rows of crosses, the patriarchal omophorion, there was a precious crown on his head, and the true signet ring of great value on his finger. Taking the [reliquary containing the] right arm of Saint Gregory, he blessed the kingdom and the entire land, saying: "I thank you, my Lord Jesus, Who brought me before this earthly tribunal with its transitory punishments and shame and did not wait for that great and fearsome tribunal with its endless punishment and eternal shame. But give them a good leader and a select shepherd who will shepherd Your rational flock as You see fit. As for those people who have held Your tribunal and have judged me like God before my day, You decide the right between them and me."

[223] Then he removed his vestment and placed it on a silver table. Similarly, he removed the veil of the episcopacy, folded it and covered it [g185] with precious cloth. He removed from his finger the costly ring and included the [*kat'oghikosal*] scepter. He gave all this to messengers, saying: "Here is what you seek." Then he had brought to him a very thick black hair shirt and put it on. On his head he placed a cowl, made of the same material. Saying farewell to everyone, alone and silent he quit the house of the episcopacy, which was close to the city of Sis and was called Glxibats'i. However, those senseless men, so filled with envy and malice, were not satisfied with this deed and were unrepentant. Rather, they got it into their heads that he might leave that kingdom and go to the Eastern lands where he would be received with the honor of the *kat'oghikosate* and would refute them. And so, they sent after and seized him, taking him to the fortress of Lambron where he was put in metal fetters. Later they removed the fetters. But they did not remove him from custody for four years. This occurred in the year 738 [A.D. 1289].

Having done this deed, the king and the assembly sent a nuncio to the Eastern lands of the Armenians, to us, and to the other bishops and princes of the land. [The nuncio was] Step'annos *vardapet* Skewr'ats'i, who had studied and trained with us. He brought invitational letters in which were written the reasons for the exile of the *kat'oghikos* in frivolous, lying words [g186] and ludicrous facts like treasures extracted from a garbage dump. They concocted thirty such articles against Kostandin. One of these charges was that "before the mass he drank sherbet." If such was the case, it derived not from greed or lack of piety, but from the weakness of his body. Second, that he collected a tax from the dens of prostitution which exist in Hr'omklay. O accusers, [such places] are the norm in cities of the Armenians, Byzantines, and all other peoples. [Kostandin] did not found such places. And if he did collect [such taxes], he did not give it to the Church like a tithe or gift, but to the fortress keepers, as a stipend. Moreover, if this is such a harmful practise, why do the patriarchal canons stipulate that taxes in *dahekans* should be given to the Church from prostitutes, adulterers, and all other doers of harm? Now if you think to do something to improve the nation, that is the monarch's business. First, you

should eliminate [such practises] from your own kingdom, and then order everyone else to give them up. The other charges [against Kostandin] resembled these examples and did no harm either to the faith or to the Church, and so we consider it superfluous to repeat them here.

After these charges [in the letter] they flatteringly invited us to go to an assembly to select a new patriarch. We responded as follows: "We do not [g187] share in the impeachment [of the *kat'oghikos*] nor shall we participate in replacing him. Let whoever so arrogantly and willfully removed him worry about holding a new election, and may the will of the Creator visit his church." When the messenger returned he found—even before our reply—that a certain hermit named Step'annos, called Hr'omayets'i, had been established on the throne of the *kat'oghikosate*. He was a good man, full of all virtue. At this time Egyptian troops led by Sultan Alp'i came in a huge mob against the great seaside capital city of Tripoli. In the city was the seat of the patriarch of Antioch and the prince who was called its king. When Sultan P'ntuxtar had captured Antioch in the year 717 [A.D. 1268] and had enslaved or slaughtered more than 120,000 people and demolished the divine churches, broke the wall and flooded the area, the throne of the patriarchate was moved to Tripoli.

[224] The sultan had camped around the city and gave it to an accursed count, a Frank, who was a great prince in the city. Then he took it and, with merciless swords, [the Egyptian Mamelukes] destroyed and captured innumerable numbers of Christians. They demolished and burned churches. There was an image of Christ [g188] in the senior church which portrayed [Christ] laying on the Cross. No one seeing it could believe that it was fashioned from inanimate materials, since it seemed to breathe and live. This image was pulled down, a rope was passed around [the image's] neck and it was dragged through the streets until it was completely in pieces. There was great mourning among the Christians. This happened in the year 738 [A.D. 1289]. After a year, in 740 [A.D. 1291] Akka, the great and populous city of the Corinthians, was taken. Akka was also situated on the coast and was the home and seat of three Frankish kings, as well as of the Templars, Hospitallers, and the Germans. Also there was the great *artsue'sk'* of Jerusalem, that is, the archbishop. Now of the three kings, one was a friend of, and united with, the sultan of Egypt, and he was tricked by him. [The sultan had said:] "Give the city into my hands and I will eliminate those other kings and give everything to you." Thus, through deceit, did [the sultan] capture that impregnable and unassailable city and its citadel. He demolished it to its foundations and toppled all its wonderfully constructed buildings. Some [residents] were killed. Many put their belongings into boats and took ship.

However, as for the [head of the] Hospitallers, who was their favorite, they did him no harm. Instead, they peacefully removed him from the city with his folk, and he then crossed the sea to the grat land [g189] of the Franks. This [departure] caused unconsolable sorrow to all the Christian peoples. After all of this, the Lord grew angry at the Ask'anazeen nation of the Armenians. Due to our billowing sins, He gave us to drink the dregs of bitterness from the cup of wrath. He recalled the slandering of Kostandin and awoke to defend His Church. He motivated the sultan of Egypt to come with countless troops against the invincible fortress of Hr'omklay where the residence of patriarchs and the seat of the *kat'oghikos* of the Armenians were located. Also located there were indescribably holy things such as the relics of Apostles, patriarchs, all the principal martyrs, and [relics] of the most glorious of our people, the right arm of Saint Gregory the Illuminator, his staff, throne, and the altar on which he performed Christ's divine liturgy. [Also among these relics were] Saint Hr'ip'sime's slipper, towel, and a belt stained with her blood. After a month of fighting, the city was taken followed by the lower citadel, then the highest part where *Kat'oghikos* Grigor had built a lovely church and a palace for the patriarch.

[225] Seizing *Kat'oghikos* Lord Step'annos with twelve bishops and many priests and deacons, [the Mamelukes] brought them before the sultan. They ravaged [g190] the fortress, looted and robbed the churches of their appointments, stripping them of immense divine wealth and all their belongings. However, they did not pull down the church itself. The sultan was overjoyed. Among the many words he had with the *kat'oghikos* he asked the following question: "It is more than one hundred years since you have perched here,

and many times our sultans tried and failed to capture the place in battle. How did it come about that during your own *kat'oghikosate* we captured the place so easily?" The *kat'oghikos* responded: "I do not know. Only God knows the reason. Perhaps it was because of our sins." The sultan said: "It was not due to my strength. Rather, God betrayed you and your fortress into my hands. For I planned to depart on three occasions, but your God did not let me go but stopped me, and then gave it to me."

Having said this, [the sultan] designated fortress keepers and ordered that the wall which the catapults had demolished should be repaired. Then he arose and went to Damascus where he displayed the *kat'oghikos* to the citizens, circulating him around through the squares. Then he went on to Egypt, taking [the *kat'oghikos*] with him in iron fetters. And there he remained in jail for a year. And then he died there, the happy and glorious *kat'oghikos* [g191] Lord Step'annos. The Christians, receiving an order, took [the *kat'oghikos*' body] to the Syrian church of Habash and laid it to rest in honor. This disaster occurred in the year 741 [A.D. 1292]. As for all the holy objects which had fallen captive, they vanished without a trace or indication, and never appeared again, despite the many times King Het'um sought for them. However, after taking Hr'omklay, [the Egyptian Mamluks] left the fortress of Behest to him.

Now do you behold, you judges and slanderers of your patriarch, how quickly God sought justice, took vengeance, and brought punishment? You exiled Him from the church at Glxibats' and He exiled your choice [for *kat'oghikos*] from the great throne at Hr'omklay. Just as you, with your own hands, denuded [the previous *kat'oghikos*] of his vestments, [God], using the hands of the sultan of Egypt, stripped the patriarch you selected. You sent [the previous *kat'oghikos*] to prison at Lambron fortress in fetters. [God] sent your [*kat'oghikos*] in fetters to an inescapable dungeon in Egypt. Where now are the patriarchal vestments, the revered crown, Saint Gregory's right arm, scepter, and throne which you boasted of? Alas our stupidity, and what trials and punishments you betrayed us to.

**[226]** As for the see which had been located in Hr'omklay, it was established by the blessed *Kat'oghikos* Grigoris who [g192] was called *Vkayase'r* [Martyrophile; Grigor II *Vkayase'r*, 1066-1105]. For at that time there was no [permanent] see of the Armenians [in Cilicia]. Rather, [the *kat'oghikos*] circulated about here and there. [Grigor *Vkayase'r*] purchased this fortress from the wife and sons of the great Frankish prince called Joselin. He placed a throne in it and confirmed it as the home of the patriarchs of the Armenians. Ten *kat'oghikoi* resided there. First, Grigoris, then his brother, Nerse's [Nerses IV Klayets'i (*Shnorali*), 1166-1173], then their brother's son, Grigoris, who built the church. He was followed by Grigor *Tghay* [Grigor IV *Tgha*, 1173-1193] who fell [to his death] from the rock cliff of Kopitar'. He was succeeded by Grigoris Apirat [Grigor VI Apirat, 1194-1203], then by Yovhanne's [Hovhannes VI Ssets'i, 1203-1221], Kostandin [Kostandin I Bardzrberdts'i, 1221-1267], Yakob [Hakob I Klayets'i, 1268-1286], and the other Kostandin [Kostandin II Katukets'i, 1286-1289] who was exiled. He was succeeded by Step'annos [Step'annos IV Hromklayets'i, 1290-1293], who was imprisoned in Egypt and died there. More than 140 years had transpired to the day of [Hr'omklay's] capture.

After all these events, King Het'um again convened an assembly and had ordained as *kat'oghikos* of the Armenians Lord Grigor, bishop of Anawarza in the year 742 [A.D. 1293]. He was a learned and virtuous man, a lover of the Church, a lover of [Church] festivals and compiler of a book on such feast-days, who made to shine the memories of the martyrs. [Grigor VII Anavarzets'i, 1293-1307] knew the Latin and Greek languages and literatures. In the second year [of his *kat'oghikosate*] confusion arose over [the correct day for celebrating] Easter, and the disruption of the lunar calculations [for Easter] of all peoples. For we had reached the erroneous calculation which appeared after 500 years by which [calculations based on] the lunar cycle [for Easter/Passover] completely collapsed. For the Greeks, [Easter in that year] was on [g193] April 6th; for the Hebrews, the 16th of Nisan; for the Armenians, with our immovable calendar, on the 23rd of the month of Arek. By the lunar calculations, that day was a Sunday, and so Easter should have been designated for the next Sunday. As a result, they strayed from the truth and lost their way like blind folk, and celebrated Palm

Sunday as Easter, eating and drinking merrily with the slayers of God. The Armenians, however, accurately held to the truth. Some of our brethren in Jerusalem came and confirmed to us that the light which [traditionally] descended on Saturday to honor the tomb [of Christ] truly came down on the day of *Chragaluyts'*. Those who witnessed this [phenomenon] glorified God, while the foreign partisans were shamed into silence.

[227] However, our patriarch, Lord Grigor, greatly erred here and deviated from the truth, abandoning the natural and paternal path of our saintly predecessors. Instead, he followed the easy and deviant path of the Greeks. Having convinced the king, he forcibly celebrated Palm Sunday as Easter and had the entire land of Cilicia do likewise. They had Easter without freedom. However, the modest monasteries did not accept this. Many bishops [g194] and *vardapets* did not accept it and some secretly kept [the traditional date for Easter]. Consequently, many were beaten, persecuted, and exiled. Through these irregular deeds many were fooled and led astray by the *kat'oghikos*.

Moreover, [the *kat'oghikos*] stipulated that fasting days should not be ameliorated by [permitting] oil, yogurt mixed with water, or any other meatless foods, and that consecrations should not be held on major feast-days. He also ordered that oil should be blessed for the sick, for sinners [seeking penance], and for infants. Little by little he introduced all Roman [Catholic] Church traditions into our Church. One by one he abandoned our own [traditions]. He sent many emissaries and letters of agreement to the patriarch in Constantinople and promised to do whatever they requested. He also sent a letter suggesting unity to Abuna, who was *kat'oghikos* of the Syrian Nestorians. We even saw this. However, he did not send anything informing us in the Eastern lands. All he said was that he wanted the see of Antioch to be ours and that, due to the times, he wanted there to be unity among Rome, ourselves, and all [Christian] peoples. But here and there the vile stench of what was to come was noticeable. Some from our own land agreeably accepted this [g195] and began to denigrate our ancestors and consented to the innovations and alterations.

During all this we were constantly gnawed at by anxiety, day and night, alternately freezing and melting in alarm. There was no place of hope or refuge where, perhaps, we could bring forth a few spiritual warriors to fight against them. We were frightened that, in our own times, Satan had awakened to fight against the Church, and that within our midst this storm of conflict would arise and destroy our remaining people. For this reason, when Bishop Kostandin of Caesarea, [the *kat'oghikos'* messenger] arrived, we wrote a document with the united counsel of our land's bishops and princes, describing the sound faith and ranks of our Armenian Church, addressed to the *kat'oghikos*, Lord Grigor. [This was done] so that he not infect all members of the Church like an incurable and fast-spreading cancer. The nuncio, knowing the wounds [that would be inflicted] did not agree to take this letter on some pretexts. We have placed a copy of the letter here below [g196].

[228]

---

## 69.

***Letter concerning the faith and the orders of the Church from the Eastern land to Kat'oghikos of the Armenians, Lord Grigor, written by the hand of Lord Step'annos, bishop of Siwnik'. In it is the declaration of orthodox faith of Saint Gregory the Wonder worker and Athanasius of Alexandria.***

"Raised up by the invincible power of God and protected by His ineffable right hand, caressed by the lofty arm of Jesus, and ennobled by the wonderfully powerful grace of the Spirit, the blessed, pure and pristine Church of Armenia, a bride without stain or reproach from the Heavenly Bridegroom, was planted and

founded by the holy Apostles Thaddeus and Bartholomew, and tended by the marvellous sweat of the awesome and incomparable man Grigoris. [Our Church] first expresses its unlimited, unbounded thanks and unending blessings to its Creator Who did not compel us to drink the final dregs of the cup of perdition and to experience the irrevocable disaster from the destructive charms which confronts us, the fitting punishment for an embittered clan. Rather, after inflicting severe punishments and frightful developments [on us] He brought life again and gave comfort to our grieving and abandoned souls [g197].

Moreover, in place of our bare head He has given us a splendid crown. In place of ashes and sackcloth and modest furniture, [He has given] a joyous feast. And thus, with the son of Amos, do I exalt and cry out: "My being will rejoice in the Lord, since He dressed me in the clothing of salvation and the robe of joy. He placed on my head a crown, like a bridegroom wears, and adorned me with ornaments, like a bride." Together with David I say: "The Lord will not be angry with us forever, and will not hold a grudge for all eternity."

And now I shall humbly address you on my knees, I, the insignificant Step'annos of Siwnik', overseer and leader of the throne of this lordly House. You with your radiant head, wonderfully and beautifully illuminated by the grace of the Holy Spirit of Saint Grigorios, father of the race of Hayk, universal *kat'oghikos* who rules from the Gate of the Huns and Lp'ink', from the Caspian Sea and Mount Caucasus to the borders of Egypt and the Western Sea where the sun sets.

Along with this greeting I wish to inform your venerable person that the strange words issuing from the mouths of many men, certain actions, and various pretexts, are causing us serious concern. Who knows, perhaps the Last Days are upon us [g198] and Satan now sees an opportunity to trample and crush under his feet and burn in a fiery furnace the beautiful radiant leaves and branches of our faith, [namely] the holy rules of our blessed Church, confirmed by Gregory and his sons, our other holy Fathers, and our ancestors whose great labors were fertilized with such blood and sweat. [Perhaps Satan may] suddenly burn, corrupt and extinguish all their beautiful luster.

**[229]** There are two reasons why we put this [matter] before you. One is that we have full confidence in you, our blessed father, and in your purity and sancity and we wish to rely on you without doubt. Secondly, [we want] to stop the insults and blows issuing from the mouths of gossiping and slandering people who, like the Scythians or Gibeonites, run from house to house spreading evil rumors everywhere, saying: "Our *kat'oghikos* is a Greek and is allied to them." God and you know the truth of the matter. As it happens, this [gossip] is not only something we have heard just now. For when we, in our lowliness, were there [in Cilicia] near your glorious self, monks from Karmir mountain accosted our ears with [such accusations]. And the God-crowned king and the general assembly [of clerics], regarding these allegations as true, did not ordain your candidates, who had been chosen by the Holy Spirit [g199].

For this reason we seek two things from you: one, a refutation; the other, an affirmation. This [request] comes not from a man but, one might say, is prompted by the influence of the Holy Spirit, to eliminate the slanders of many folk and to heal those who are weak-minded.

The affirmation is adherence to the complete definition of the faith in Our Lord Jesus Christ, the blessed Mother of God, and in the holy and redeeming Cross, as accepted by the blessed and Apostolic man, Gregory, illuminator of the Armenians, and his sons and grandsons and [as expressed by] the three God-convened Councils, including the entire canonical order in the blessed Church, which need not be elucidated one by one to your wise eminence.

After all this, [affirmation includes] holding firmly to the second renewal of the doctrine of faith and the correct definitions regarding the orders of the Church [as expressed] in the blessed councils of the Armenians regarding the evil heresy of the Nestorians and the world-wrecking, filthy Council of Chalcedon. Each of these evils, in their times, were fought against greatly and with the greatest efforts. In order to protect the

people, leaders of the Armenian Church and princes of our people assembled and, scrupulously investigating the issues, pulled out the tares from among the good plants and sowed the seeds of truth and [g200] proper orthodoxy. The light of their efforts must not be overturned and extinguished. Rather, they must always be kept burning within us.

## [230]

Now let us speak about the Councils.

1. First we mention [the Council of] Shahapivan. Among the attendees was the invincible sage Anania, metropolitan of Siwnik' and [who was] also one of Mesrop's students. The head of the assembly was that champion of the faith, Yovhan Mandakuni, along with all the bishops and princes of the Armenians. This [assembly was convened] because of the Council of Chalcedon and other specific matters, which Satan had implanted in our people.
2. Another council was convened in Nor kaghak' [Vagharshapat] by Armenian and Assyrian orthodox regarding the evil heresy of the Nestorians in Khuzestan, and about the orders of the Church. [The meeting was led] by Babgen, *kat'oghikos* of the Armenians, and [was attended] by the venerable Mushe', metropolitan of Siwnik'.
3. The council held in Dvin in the time of *Kat'oghikos* Nerse's about the definitions of Chalcedon and the heresy of Nestor [being practised] in the loathsome monastery of Grigor Manazhihr E'r'azhik. Present there was Petros, the metropolitan of Siwnik', a student of Movse's *k'ert'oghahayr*.
4. Another assembly, also held in the same city of Dvin under *Kat'oghikos* Movse's regarding the Chalcedonian heresy. Present there was our Petros, who established the Armenian [era of] dating and established [the doctrinal formulation] "Who was crucified." Yizdbuzid was martyred then [g201].
5. The third council at Dvin under *Kat'oghikos* Abraham regarding the separation of the Iberians/Georgians [from the Armenian Church] by the vile Kiwrion, and the separation of the Aghuans. This [council] was under the direction of the marvellous K'ristap'or, metropolitan of Siwnik', along with other holders of sees of the Armenians. In this meeting they completely eliminated any familiarity or mixing with Chalcedonians and, under fearsome anathemas, prevented [the Armenian Church] from any closeness or communion with them.
6. The Armenian council held in Partaa in Aghuania under Eghia, *kat'oghikos* of the Armenians. [This council] again concerned itself with Chalcedonians. [Chalcedonians] had designated as *kat'oghikos* of the Aghuans a certain Nerse's, called Bakur. [The council expelled him] with wicked insults and also Queen Spram, and united with the Armenians the [Aghuanian] flock which had become separated [from it].

## [231]

7. A council which took place before this at T'e'odupo'lis [Karin/Erzerum] concerning unity between Armenians and Byzantines in the days of *Katoghikos* Ezr [Ezr I P'ar'azhnakertts'i, 630-641] by order of Emperor Heraclius. Ezr agreed to this [meeting] and ignorantly became infected [with Chalcedonianism]. However, Siwnik' and other see-holders did not accept the [Chalcedonian] heresy. Rather, they remained whole, thanks to the grace of God. For this reason, Yovhan Mayragomets'i was insulted and exiled by Ezr.
8. A council held in Manazkert in the time of Yovhanne's of O'dzun, which cleansed [from the Church] the heresy of Ezr, which had continued through the tenures of six *kat'oghikoi*. With fearsome anathemas [the council] distanced us from the Byzantines [g202].

9. A council of blessed fathers at Ani, at which they examined [the beliefs of] Vahan, the *kat'oghikos* who was from Baghk' and who was sympathetic to the Iberians/Georgians. He had introduced images into the churches of the Armenians and removed the glorious Cross from all altars, decorating [the altars] with images. They anathematized him and put a certain Step'annos in his place.

10. In recent times, in the days of *Spasalar Zak'are'* and *Atabek Ivane'* of Georgia, another assembly was convened of blessed Fathers, bishops, *vardapets*, and priests at Getakan, near Sevan island, and once at Ani. With fearsome anathemas they removed and distanced from themselves all partisans of Georgian and Byzantine [religious doctrine].

Now, all the Fathers and synods with scrupulous care cleansed the Armenian Church of all the various weeds. And they have left us irrefutable testaments about the [proper] definition of the faith and the ranks of the Church [hierarchy]. Consequently, it is necessary in all submission to hold firm to this definition without adding or subtracting anything, to always read their writings and, by them, to administer to and conduct the Armenian Church in matters of doctrine, feast-days, and communion which have been cleansed of all improper admixtures. You know well all these definitions and it is superfluous for me [g203] to repeat them here. These are affirmations [of our principles] from which we may not deviate in any way—even to the point of [shedding our] blood and [causing] our death. To do so would subject us to anathema and would distance us from communion with our blessed Fathers, as ungrateful sons who no longer defer to their fathers. The punishment for this is known from writings.

[232] Now as for rejections. [We must] reject entirely everyone united in the beliefs of Chalcedon who, in ignorance, have confirmed the heresy of Nestor and thereby have anathematized themselves and distanced themselves from life. We must fully anathematize that same council [of Chalcedon] and everyone who believes in it, for they have split in two the ineffable unity of Christ and have abandoned God to believe in man. We must repudiate and completely stop all irregular admixtures to holy communions, corrupting it with leavened [bread] and water, which is a negation of baptismal grace and a corruption of the purifying mystery. For [the Chalcedonians] would substitute [wine mixed with water] for what was given to us to drink at birth.

O wretches, who have surpassed in wisdom and power even the Bestower of these gifts by adding unleavened bread and water [to the communion chalice]. Did He not say to His disciples, taking unleavened bread and a cup of unmixed wine: "Do this in memory of me." Why did He not take leavened bread and add water [to the wine] [g204]? [Supporters of Chalcedon], weak-minded and ignorant as they are, allege that [mixing water with wine is done because] both blood and water flowed from the side [of Christ on the Cross]. But [these ignorant people] do not understand the mystery of the Church regarding the rib. As an example [we have] the ancestor Adam and his rib, from which were born all the Christian nations, radiant and pure. A two-fold grace was bestowed on us, shown in two other examples: washing in the Jordan [River] and His counsel in the Upper Story and then what flowed from His divine side.

Again, at the hour of celebrating communion, [the sacrament should be offered] not with a mob of people pressed shoulder to shoulder, as in lay gatherings, and not with one wafer divided into eight or ten parts. Rather, with awe and trembling, the communicant should unite with God individually. If celebrants who are equal in rank [to the officiating priest] are present, they should stand by and receive communion from him as a blessing. If one cites the letter of Dionysius as a support for [Chalcedonian practises], behold, he does not say that there are many celebrants and officiants. Rather, he commands that there should be one celebrant, like Jesus, while other [priests] should surround the holy altar and receive the bread of life [from the celebrant].

Again, the Church of God should not be used as a place where tables are set up and where people brazenly sit and sleep, where the doors are left open so that dogs and pigs may enter, as [g205] we have seen with our own eyes. Instead, [the church building] should be kept with care, respect, and holiness, as befits the House of

God. Take as an example the homes of physical kings with their many precautions and guards [against intrusion].

[233] In addition, one should not enter a Roman church to participate in a celebration or to take communion. One should not celebrate the Nativity and Annunciation with them. Rather, this should be done according to the accurate order established by Saint James: the Nativity on January sixth, and the Annunciation on April sixth. Moreover, as is the law in the Armenian Church, one must resolutely conduct [the] *Chragaloyts'* [Christmas eve, Easter eve] [observances] with a preliminary feast and a pre-celebration feast, dining only on oil and cheese and meatless foods. For the five days of *nawakatik'* [consecration] are full of great mystery and it is entirely unlawful to equate them with the pre-celebrations for the Resurrection and the Nativity and other fasting days. Although I have many words of advice, there is no need to lengthen this [letter] and give instructions as though to an ignorant person. The little we have given should be enough for a wise person.

Again, even though we know about the Apostolic custom of blessing oil for the sick and for penitents, our Fathers did not transmit such a practise to us. I consider it extreme boldness for people whose souls have been polluted, to place their faith in [holy] oil [g206], to pay some small fee to have oil blessed, and to justify that [practise]. We must keep distant from such profitable ventures and we must follow down the path of our Fathers with resolute steps. If you stipulate that oil of the second order should be used for catecumens, I accept that.

Why should I lengthen my words? We prefer to descend into Hell with our Fathers, than to go up to Heaven with the Romans. Let this much be sufficient.

May it be known to you, the holy head of the patriarchs, that although we are obedient to our Lord in everything, nonetheless, we beseech you to dispel the silly thoughts [about you] in the minds of our young and ignorant. [Dispel them] and heal them, since the weak should be helped in everything.

We request that you sign, with an authentic and inviolable signature, the *Henotikon*, making a firm and unwavering statement of the faith, with the unity of your blessed and fortunate bishops. Send it to us as a perpetual document so that our submission and dedication to your holy person is immutable, and so that you reign over our churches as radiant as the sun.

Should you wish to introduce [changes] into our Church more or less than what we have from our Fathers; or, if our writings are despicable to you, in that case [g207] do not be bothered and do not bother us. Let that land [of Cilicia] and whoever so chooses be [ruled doctrinally] according to your will. Then leave us in our slavish captivity [to our laws] and we will so remain, hoping for a visitation from On High. Should you punish us with royal rage, we are ready for punishment, exile, and prison, for death, and [we are ready] to die for the traditions of our blessed Apostolic Fathers.

Be well in your royal work, O Grigorios, *kat'oghikos* of the Armenians, father of wisdom and mother of orthodoxy, source of the faith and fearless champion of the blessed Church. And may the Lord or Lords protect your sovereign head."

[234]

### ***Signatures of unity of the bishops, vardapets, and princes of the East***

We, Lord Sargis and Lord Grigor, from the same diocese, agree and adhere to the traditions of our Fathers set out above. As for those who do not accept the traditions of the country, [described in] this profession of faith confirmed by the patriarchs, may they be anathematized along with Sabel and Arius.

I, Lord Yovhanne's, occupier of the see at Bjni, am in agreement with the above-written definition [g208] of our patrimonial faith. I anathematize as wicked heretics those who oppose it.

I, Grigor, nicknamed Bjnets'i', student and servant of the Word, executor of the commands of this see am firmly and unshakably in agreement with the above profession of the faith, to the point of death. I anathematize whoever does not submit to the holy Fathers.

I, Lord Yovhanne's, bishop of Haxbat by the grace of God, am in agreement with those of my diocese as regards this orthodox statement of the faith. Those who disagree with it I curse along with the heretics.

I, Lord Mxit'ar, bishop of Hawuts' t'ar' am in unshakable agreement with the above statement of the faith, to the point of dying for it. I anathematize those who do not accept the blessed Fathers.

I, Lord Margare', the brother's son of Vanakan *vardapet*, agree with what is written above [as well as] what my uncle cautioned in his testament that "if a snake wants to wiggle its tail, be careful not to let it raise its head." Do not believe the deceivers. May those who oppose the traditions of the first Fathers be excluded from the glory of the Son of God.

I, Lord Sargawag, the lowly bishop of Goght'n, am in agreement with this document which states the divine traditions [g209]. May those who do not accept them be anathematized by the Holy Trinity.

I, Esayi, the lowest of scholars and the least of teachers, concur with my students and unite with what is written here and with the signatories above. We anathematize those who do not concur.

I, Dawit', the lowly preacher of the Word, *vardapet* of the Church of Armenia, concur with and support this orthodox statement of the faith which contains the accurate traditions of the blessed Fathers. Those who do not accept this and are opposed to it, we anathematize.

We, the useless servants of Christ, Elikum and Liparit, sons of the glorious princes Tarsayich and Ivane', with our brothers and sons and all the *azats*, accept this God-given testament which was transmitted by our Fathers. We accept it to the point of dying for it. May those opposed be separated from communing with the blessed Fathers.

We, the sinful servants of God, Papak' and E'ach'i, sons of the pious Prince Pr'osh, together with our *azats*, in all obedience support and adhere to the traditions of the blessed Fathers outlined above in this document. May those who do not accept it be anathematized and distanced from our blessed Fathers and from our bishops instituted by God [g210].

---

[235]

***The faith of Gregory the Wonderworker, which he learned from the revelation of the blessed John the Evangelist about the faith, at the instigation and order of the most holy Mary, the perpetual virgin and the Mother of God.***

There is one God, the living Word of the Father, which is wisdom in person, power, and the form of being, the perfect Father of the perfect only-begotten Son. There is one Lord, God from God, the form and picture of divinity, the living Word, wisdom that contains everything in the creative power of beings; creative power of all that receives existence; the true Son of the Truth, invisible from the invisible, incorruptible from the incorruptible, immortal from the immortal, eternal from the eternal.

There is but one Holy Spirit of God, which came into being appearing with a Son and making itself manifest to men. There is the image of the Son, perfect from perfect, the course of life and of living; the distributor of holiness by which one knows the Father; [He is] above all and in all, the Son of God by which all exist. The Trinity is perfect in glory and [g211] in perpetuity and royalty, indivisible, and without blemish, because it is not a created thing, nor a servant of the Trinity which can be set to a lower rank as something which had not existed previously but had come into existence. The Son is never beneath the Father or the Spirit to the Son, but is an unchanging, invariable Trinity forever.

\*

***Declaration of the venerable Archbishop Athanasius (At'anas) concerning the divine Incarnation of the Word with the consent of the blessed Council of Nicaea.***

We confess the Son of God eternally born from the Father, before eternity. But in our latter day, [the Son of God] was bodily born from Mary, for our salvation. [This is] as the holy Apostle says: "Now when the fulfillment of time arrived, God sent forth His Son, born of a woman." And He is both God and the Son of God in the Spirit, while [He is] the son of man, in the flesh. One Son with a divine nature, not two. One nature of the Divine Word incarnate, to be revered along with the corporeal, in one worship. There are not two [g212] [separate] sons, one the Son of God, true and worthy of worship, and another son, a man born of Mary, and like other men, not worthy of worship. Rather, as I said, God and the Son of God are one and the same divinity, not something different. The One born corporeally from Mary in these end days is the same [as God]. It is just as the angel replied when Mary, the Mother of God, asked: "How could this be when I have not known a man?" And the angel said: "The Holy Spirit shall come to you and power from On High shall be upon you and thus from you shall be born One who will be called holy and the Son of God."

[236] He Who is born will be called blessed and the Son of God born from the Virgin Mary, the Son of God by nature and the true God, not somehow an associate [of God]. Only physically, through Mary, is He a man; spiritually, he is the Son of God, God Himself. He bears our pains, as is written: "Christ suffered for us in the body," and, "He did not spare His Son, but gave Him up for us all." As God, He remained impassive and unchanged, according to the word of the prophet: "I am God and do not change." Because of our sins He physically died so that death would be eliminated for us. It is as the Apostle said: "Death was destroyed [g213] through [Your] victory. Death, where now is your sting?" And again: "Christ died for our sins, as is written." Unknowable and immortal, He remained pure because of His divinity by the power of the Father. As Saint Peter said: "Death does not have the strength to overthrow Him. He ascended to Heaven and is seated at the right hand of the Father. This is the body of the Word which was lifted up, according to the words of David: "The Lord said to my Lord 'Sit you at my right hand.'" This is confirmed by the Lord Himself and by the Apostles. Through His divinity He is forever part of the Father and coeternal as the ineffable power of His Father. This is as Paul teaches: "Christ is the power of God, the wisdom of God," with [Christ] being both the Son of God and God. As it was promised, [He shall] judge both the living and the dead, according to the words of the Apostle. He judges what is covered in darkness and reveals the mysteries of hearts and distributes to each praise and shame as is deserved.

Now, should anyone teach more than is contained in Scripture, saying [for example] that the Son of God is one [entity] and the man born of Mary is yet another; or, that the body of our Lord is from above and not from the Virgin Mary; or, that the [g214] divine is conceived physically, mixed, and transformed; or, that the Son of God suffered diseases; or, that the body of our Savior should not be worshipped and that it is not like the body of our Lord and God, let that person be anathematized by the holy catholic Church. Such a person [was described] by the inspired Apostle of God, who said: "May he be anathematized who evangelizes more than was given." Amen and amen. Let it be, let it be.

## 70.

***Concerning the world-ruling kings who came after Arghun-Khan, and about all their activities.***

First and foremost of the nation of archers [Mongols] to rule over our land was Hulegu, [who ruled for] eight years. He was followed by his eldest son, Abagha, for 18 years. He was succeeded by Abagha's brother's son, Ahmat, and then Arghun, for seven years. [Arghun's] death was caused by a dearly-loved concubine, who poisoned him. He died in the plain of Mughan on the feast of [Saint] Theodore [February 17]. Upon his death there took place a destruction of many grandee nobles: Xo'ja, the royal treasurer; Sultan, who [managed] food and drink; Ch'ishu and Awrdugha, who were overseers [g215] of the courts; and the great head of the divan, Sadadoli, a benevolent Jew who was in charge of all taxes in our land. Immense and unlimited royal treasures became scattered. Meanwhile, the military commanders and the grantees divided into two [factions]: some called upon Arghun's relative, Baidu, from Baghdad for him [to come and] sit on the throne of the kingdom; others hastened [to summon] Arghun's brother, Geikhatu, from Byzantium. [Geikhatu] arrived and sat on the throne of the kingdom, as khan over all the lands. This occurred in the year 740 of the Armenian Era [A.D. 1291].

[It was Geikhatu] who had money and *dahekans* created out of paper bearing the denomination written on it, and he wanted to eliminate [the circulation of] silver money and use [paper money] instead. His order was issued with severity in all the cities. After four years of his rule, commotion arose in his palace, as he suspected some of duplicity. Those [courtiers] who were oppressed by [Geikhatu's] bitter and indiscriminate abominations wanted to extend their hands to Baidu. Thus [Geikhatu] began to arrest all his grantees: Eljita, who was in charge of the hunting birds and animals; Dawlatay, who oversaw all the food and drink; Xonchibal, who was in charge of many troops, as well as many others who were put into irons and kept together in a [g216] place guarded by his senior officials. [Geikhatu] himself advanced with his troops to meet Baidu. Now those captives secretly gave their support to a Ten Thousander [commander] named Duk'al, and to a royal relative named Eldar, who united and came against [the jailers]. They removed the captives and put their own guards there. One of them was the great Thousander Xur'umch'i, whom they brought to our monastery of Tat'ev and placed in safety with us for many days. Later, he was freed and reached his principality, through the miracle of the blessed Church.

[238] Then [the rebels] crossed to this side of the Arax River with many troops, and began to pursue Geikhatu. When all the latter's soldiers heard about this, they were frightened and abandoned him. They dispersed and Geikhatu remained alone. Unwillingly, he turned back and went to his palace. He was caught and kept by the rebel forces. When the freed captives and the great military commanders, Eldar and Duk'al, saw this, they seized [Geikhatu] and strangled him to death. They killed all his adherents generally, and then went before Baidu and, with great joy, seated him as khan and king over the entire land in the plain of Sraw [g217].

[Baidu] had been a Christian, but was deceived by his military commanders and became a Muslim. He ruled his kingdom until autumn in a weak and poor fashion, unworthy of a man. It was he who sent Jalal, Tarsayich's son, with some Mongols to the great see of the Aghuans, Amaras, which in ancient times had been the seat of their *kat'oghikos*. [Baidu] had brought to him the scepter of the blessed Grigoris, son of Vardan, son of Saint Gregory the Illuminator. [Grigor's] grave was located there and, consequently, his scepter was kept in the same church. Along with this, [the Mongols] also took the wondrous holy cross, which had

been there since ancient times, made of pure gold and adorned with 36 precious stones. This was betrayed [to the Mongols] by an infamous and senseless priest from that same diocese.

Now it came about that Despina, the daughter of the Byzantine emperor, was located there. She had been sent as a wife for Abagha-Khan, who had raised her for his adopted son, Baidu. With great entreaties she requested that cross and scepter and sent them to the royal city of Constantinople. And so it happened that the land of the Aghuans was deprived of these precious and divine treasures. Now when autumn had arrived, there came against Baidu from Khurasan [g218], Ghazan, son of Arghun, son of Abagha. [Ghazan] came against him because of the patrimonial throne, and he came with all the troops from Khurasan who are called Gharawunas. Their military commanders were the great and benevolent Xut'lushah, which [name] translates as "gracious king," and the wily and victorious in battle Nauruz (Nawr'uz), [a name] which translates "New Year's."

All of them, generally, had abandoned their native faith and had come under the faith of Muhammad. This Nauruz was a son of Arghun who became chief and *basqaq* (*pasxaz* [tax collector]) over all the earth. He committed many crimes, rebelling from Arghun and his son, Ghazan, but now he had united with them. [Nauruz] greatly hated Christians and was an enemy of churches. As a raider, he would come like an impetuous hurricane with the vanguard, which they called *manghlay*. He attacked and killed the troops which guarded the roads. Sounds of confusion and panic enveloped the royal palace, where [the residents] lived careless of security. Then the great Ten Thousander [commander], T'ach'ar, wavered and went and united with Nauruz. With that, the supporters of Baidu lost heart and one and all they abandoned him and fled [g219]. That foolish Baidu likewise fled and came to Duk'al, who was encamped with his troops in the plain of Naxjawan, by the banks of the Arax.

[239] Now when Duk'al saw this, all his forces collapsed. His Thousanders vacillated, then they seized Baidu and sent him to Ghazan. They themselves scattered here and there. As for Duk'al, he went and entered the strongholds of Georgia. But later he was arrested by Bek'ay and handed over to Xur'umch'i, who put him to a wicked death. Similarly, Eldar fled to the area of the city of Karin, but later was found near one *sheikh* and killed. It was the same with all the grandees: they were arrested and killed, one and all. Among them was the benevolent Eljitay, who ruled over our state at the head of 12,000 men. They took him to Gilan and put him to a wicked death. Thus, without battle and warfare, [Ghazan's partisans] took all the lands. They seated Ghazan on the throne of the kingdom of his father, Arghun.

However, that God-hating Nauruz, when he came, issued an order generally to demolish all the churches, to rob all Christian men, and to circumcise the priests. As a result [of Nauruz' policies] great sorrow and unbelievable disasters full upon Christians [g222] everywhere. [Nauruz' partisans] demolished many churches and killed many priests and Christians. Those who had been spared the sword were robbed of all their belongings. Many women and little children were enslaved. However, [the Mongols] worked unnarratable, violent, and damaging crimes in Baghdad, Mosul, Hamian, Tavrezh, Maragha, in Byzantium, and in Mesopotamia. Within our borders, they robbed the churches of Naxjawan, enslaved priests, and worked many very evil deeds in addition. They wrecked the doors of shrines and overturned altars. However, the great chiefs did not permit demolition of churches, considering the Georgian troops. They also came to the great see of Siwnik' and wanted to pull down the churches, but, through bribes and force, we did not allow this. They robbed monasteries in the district of Naxjawan. As for the lands of the Armenians which the Arax River separates, they were left alone, through the grace of God. They seized the *kat'oghikos* of the Syriacs, who sat in Maragha, and they tortured him almost to death, with many indignities, and stole all his possessions. [The Mongols] also seized Ter Tirats'u, bishop of Ar'ak'etlots' [monastery] and ridiculed him with various sorts of indignities and took all his belongings. As for his monastery, which is the tomb of the holy Apostle Thaddeus [g221], the buildings were robbed, ruined, and completely destroyed.

**[240]** Now it happened that Het'um, king of the Armenians, was near Baidu. [Het'um] had arrived in this confused and crisis-filled period. He was staying at the church in Maragha, which was [the seat of] their [Syriacs'] *kat'oghikosate* and grief even reached him. He then went to Ghazan and stood face to face with him. [Ghazan] received the king with regal splendor. In his presence the king [Het'um] informed [Ghazan] about the disasters undergone by Christians. [Ghazan] said that he himself was not to blame: "I did not know about it. Nauruz did all of it." [Ghazan] immediately ordered that an edict be written [and promulgated] through all the lands that no one should dare to touch the churches or the Christians, and that everyone should dwell in peace and freely practise their own faith and worship. After this, the depredations and disorders subsided a little. As for the king, with great honor and magnificent glory he departed and went peacefully to his own land, Cilicia.

Ghazan took over the Khanate in autumn of the year 744 [A.D. 1295]. [Ghazan] ruled with awesome force and strength, with a mighty and strong arm. Over all his troops and over all the lands, [Ghazan] placed Xut'lushah, a good man, strong and victorious in [g222] warfare, who was exceedingly friendly and helpful toward Christians. [Xut'lushah] became the son-in-law of the king [Het'um], taking his sister to wife. With his help, there was peace for us and for all the lands of the Armenians. However, that accursed and blood-thirsty beast, Nauruz, went to the Khurasan area to concern himself with that land. He was scheming to betray Ghazan with some plan. However, when [Ghazan] learned about this, he killed all the folk—brothers, sons, and everyone—from Nauruz' clan. When Nauruz realized that his scheme had been revealed, he fled to innermost Khurasan. Therefore Xut'lushah assembled many troops and went after him. The Lord God gave that accursed man [Nauruz] into his hand and completely destroyed [Nauruz' partisans] in that country. It is a great wonder that they seized [Nauruz] in the city of Hre', which is located beyond Mavr and Nishapur, since our princes, Liparit and E'ach'i, happened to be there and greatly dishonored Nauruz by spitting in his face. See now the power of the Church, which greatly ripped apart its enemy and sought punishment for the demolitions. For [Nauruz'] power lasted [only] one year. But his line was completely exterminated and his name was expunged from this world. Praise and glory to the One Who took such care of His Church [g223].

**[241]** Prior to this, a certain man named Aslan emerged from the royal clan. He united many troops and military commanders under himself. Starting in the Mughan plain, he began to go against the Khan's palace. Then he crossed to this side of the Arax [River] to add even more to his mob of cavalry. When [the Khan] learned about this, he sent many troops against Aslan under the military commanders Chawp'an and Xur'umch'i. They came and fought, putting Aslan to flight. But they caught him, seizing all his partisans, whom they killed one and all, releasing torrents of blood. Also killed over this [rebellion] was Suk'ay, Abagha's brother's son, in Khurasan. So much on this [topic].

When the young king of the Georgians, Dawit', son of Demetre', saw Nauruz' coming and the demolition of churches, he was frightened and went with all his lords and noble cavalry to Met'evule't'. He entered the impregnable fortress called *Mughe' naxe'*, that is, "come and see." For support, Dawit' had the Met'evulk', the P'xayk', and all the surrounding peoples. He also captured the Gate of the Alans—called the Darial [Pass] in antiquity, and now known as Jasan's Pass. Dawit' removed the Tatar guards. This [pass] is the entryway to the Khazars, Alans, Ossetes, and Qipchaqs, and to the great northern kingdom [ruled by] Berka's descendants. Their current khans are [g224] T'awdamanku and Nuxay, grandsons of Batu and Sart'ax.

For this reason [the Mongols] sought [Dawit'] with many messengers and oaths, but he did not heed them and did not emerge. Then the great Xut'lushah arose and entered Georgia with many troops. He encamped in the plain of Muxran, which is close to the king's fortress. When he observed the impregnable fortification, he again sent emissaries and called Dawit' to come out. But the latter did not emerge and instead demanded hostages to guarantee his safety, in which case he would come out. And so [Xut'lushah] sent his own son, Shipauch'i, and three others of the grandees, as hostages. The king placed them in detention and went out to Xut'lushah with many gifts. [King Dawit'] also received from them very grand gifts and a vow that he would

not be betrayed by them. [Dawit's] *kat'oghikos* was the intermediary in all this. Then he returned to his fortress and released the hostages. As for Xut'lushah, he turned back in peace and entered the plain of R'an, to winter there [g225].

[242]

---

## 71.

### ***Conclusion by our lowly self, with accounts of receiving and administering the episcopate of Siwnik', as well as accounts of the events of our day.***

I, Step'annos, insignificant in body and spirit, after being separated from my mother's womb, was offered to the House of the Lord. I was adopted by the great and glorious Prince Smbat. On my mother's side, I descend from [the line of] Sisak, while my father was an Orbelean named Tarsayich, who ruled [over lands extending] from Baghk' to Ayrarat. Through spiritual birth in the holy baptismal font, I was adopted by Lord Hayrapet, bishop of Siwnik'. I was nourished and trained at the feet of spiritual men, and educated in reading and music. I became a psalmist and reader in the porticoes of the Lord. I was called to the [positions of] scribe and then deacon in the House of God. Then I became a priest on the awesome and divine bema, though still young, spiritually inept, and weak in character. I studied and taught divine Scripture and tasted somewhat of the balm of its sweetness. Then I received an order from the chief priest (*r'abunapet*) Nerse's, a holy man and a light of the world, and, though immature and raw, I was seated on the *vardapetal* throne. I, who felt myself in darkness, aspired to be a light to others. I, with an impure [g226] soul and a corrupt physical image, wanted to preach to others as a chief priest.

Without any spiritual calling, I, in my boldness, wanted to advance. I had prepared my ears to hear words to lead me to perdition, [such as] "you lack the [proper] dress," and, "you are an evil and bad servant," as well as the most dreadful command from Hell: "Quit. Give it up." Yet on top of all this I grew yet bolder, since I aspired to the degree of patriarch. And then all our bishops gathered near my father and they suggested that I should travel to the royal land of Cilicia, to the fortunate *kat'oghikos* and the God-crowned king of the Armenians to be ordained to the metropolitanate and to become the occupant of the see of Siwnik'. I had the folly to welcome this proposal, without realizing the terrible and superhuman burden [it entailed]. I was just enticed by worldly vanity. However, I felt that those not experiencing this [honor] were the happy ones, and happier still were those stillborn in the womb.

[243] I departed and reached the capital city of Sis and found that the patriarch [*Kat'oghikos* Yakob I, Klayets'i, 1268-1286] had quit this world and there was great mourning for us. Thereafter I continued on to another city, to Adana, where I met the king. We received from him honor far beyond our merits. I remained by [g227] the king for three months, until the [Church] council convened and, after 40 days, selected a worthy man named Kostandin [II Katukets'i, 1286-1289]. They ordained him patriarch of the Armenians on the eve of the great feast of Easter. On the following morning, they also ordained me and crowned me to [head] the blessed and Apostolic church of Siwnik'. They honored me with very great gifts and, with a second crown, established me in the position of metropolitan with the title of *protofrontes*, or first bishop of the patriarch of the Armenians, that is, the one occupying the first seat, the head of all the bishops of the Armenians. And thus, in magnificent honor, we departed from them and reached our land. We experienced much grief from the bishops of Tat'ev, until they died. Afterwards, we remained beset by a bitter and sorrowful existence, trying to unite Tat'ev and Noravank', the divided dioceses of the see.

However, we did not disturb matters, due to the strong anathemas of previous *kat'oghikoi*—Lord Kostand and Lord Yakob—and the previous bishops—Lord Yovhanne's, Lord Step'annos, Lord Sargis, another Lord

Step'annos, Lord Grigor and Lord Sargis—who had assured the church of Noravank' the entire legacy of all Vayots' dzor [g228]. Rather, as matters stood prior to us, such did we accept them. We decided that the other native see should be administered [separately], but that there should be one episcopate for the two of them, with one leader and ruler. Moreover, whoever would be bishop should not dare to view or treat them [separately], with two eyes and two minds and to show more concern for one of them. There should be no grudge or envy in this house. Their clerics should not say to one another: "You are [attached to] Tat'ev or to Noravank'." Rather, they should be as one person with one soul. Before us, in earlier times, it was so. If changes occur over time and Tat'ev becomes ruined, its legacy will go to the church of Noravank' and its inhabitants will reside there. On the other hand, should Noravank' become ruined, its legacy and belongings will be enjoyed by the church of Tat'ev, and its inhabitants will reside there. Now should it happen that after us someone thinks or schemes to destroy this verdict, one side or the other, may he be subjected to the most painful anathemas, from us and from all the patriarchs. May he be cursed by the Holy Trinity and share the fate of all evildoers.

Subsequently, should opposition or disorder arise, such as we encountered, those opponents should also be within the scope of anathemas and the current [g229] administrators should see to what is proper.

[244] Some days after our return from Cilicia, we went before the world-ruling king, Arghun. Meeting him, he received us with great honor and friendship. We informed him about our sorrows and showed him our encyclical, which he had translated and read in his presence. We also showed him the patrimonial charter regarding our physical inheritance, which my father had given. For a portion of our inheritance had been removed [which embraced] the monasteries under his principality, [namely] Tat'ev, Noravank', Ts'aghats' k'ar, Aratis, and all the others. When [Arghun] saw this, he ordered that an edict of authority be written which again confirmed all of it as ours in a double principality, spiritual and material. [Arghun] commanded us to remain and to bless a [portable] church at the royal court, which had been sent by the pope of Rome. Also present there was the Nestorian *kat'oghikos* with 12 bishops, and together, with great solemnity, we blessed [the church]. Arghun with his own hands dressed us in the patriarchal vestments which he himself had designated for the *kat'oghikos*, ourselves, and all the bishops. Taking the clapper-board in his hand, he circulated throughout the camp striking it and blessing everyone.

After a short while a bishop arrived from the same pope and baptized the younger son of the king [g230] and named him Theodosios, which they call Xarpanda (servant of God). [The child] was placed in the arms of a Frankish prince whom they called Sir Charles (Sirch'az). Now following [Arghun's] death, there ruled as king Geikhatu (K'eghat'u), whom they called *ernji t'urnji*, that is, "we have found what was lost." When we went to see him, we were received by him with honor, as had been the case with his brother. We received from him an edict of command, confirming matters again. After him, during the reign of Ghazar, we also went and received from him even greater glory than from the others. For he gave us the same edict, doubly strengthened, and ordered that as we travelled, a cross held high should precede us. He also graced us with a golden *p'ayizay*, which is a tablet about one and a half times the size of a palm, on which is written the name of God and of the khan and a few other things. We glorified and gave thanks to our Creator for such unprecedented mercy and thus, [re]assured, we returned to our home.

Then we began to [re]build the blessed church at Tat'ev, named after Saint Gregory the Illuminator, which had been demolished to the foundations. This was the third rebuilding. The first had been done by Prince Philip in the time of Lord Dawit', bishop of Siwnik' [g231]. The second [re]building was done by Lord Yovhanne's, by order of King Smbat. The third [re]building we ourselves undertook with the grace of God, using solid stones in elegant proportions suitable to its structure. Now it happened that when we were pulling down a column on the north side of the little that remained of the foundation, we discovered an indescribably holy treasure: a relic of Saint Gregory the Illuminator. [This consisted of] a part of his skull and a fragment of his right arm, placed in a small wooden chest, closed and sealed with a lead seal. We were overjoyed with this, and glorified

God with great thanksgiving. After the building was completed, we placed it in a suitable place in that church, in a spot concealed from everyone.

[245] Having received as a portion of inheritance from our brother, Elikum, the village of Arit, which had long since been shorn from the blessed church, we took and gave it to the church we had built in the name of Saint Gregory, with [Elikum's] consent. Then we wrote an indelible memorial for ourself and in confirmation of [the return of] the village of Arit, so that after us, no one would dare to ravish it from the blessed church, or overturn our memorial, not to change it, not to sell it, not to put it as a pledge nor for any other reason to betray it—either by our own folk or others, either by nobles or bishops [g232]. Should anyone be so bold as to try, may he be damned to Satan's hell, be judged along with Cain, Judas, and Arius, may his House and descendants be fuel for the unquenchable fire along with Sodom and Gomorrah, and may he endure unending tortures with the antichrist. Should authority pass to a Tachik, and should he attempt to ravish it, may he be cursed by God Almighty, and condemned by his Prophet Muhammad and by his faith and may he be lost along with the fire-worshippers and lowered into Hell. May his *halal* become *haram*. Done in the year 746 [A.D. 1297].

Before this, a fragment of the miracle-working divine Cross had been brought from the district of Artsakh. Its renown for effecting very great miracles and astounding marvels had spread throughout the entire land. It was a fragment of the envivifying Cross which was dyed with a mark of the divine blood which flowed from [Christ's] rib. [The fragment] was enclosed in a small reliquary fashioned of gold. It was the hereditary property of the grandchildren of Prince Dlen, who had a church and many brethren at Tat'ev. How it happened that this holy Cross which had borne God came to the district of Xach'en we learned from reliable men. [The told us that] a solitary hermit from an unknown land was travelling about, praying. It happened that he arrived [g233] in wintertime in the village of Dlen, having that divine and priceless treasure in a bag. Lodging in the home of a priest, he gave the bag to the housekeeper, and said: "Put this in a holy place until I depart." This took place on the night before Easter. Now it came about that a young son of the priest died during the night. However, because of the feast-day, they did not remove him then. The woman took the hermit's bag and put it by the pillow of the deceased. After the evening service, when they were sleeping a bit, that life-giving wood brought the child back to life. He began to cry out for his mother. Awakening from sleep, the mother was frightened and roused the priest. They entered the room where they saw the resurrected boy, sitting up and playing with the bag. For many hours they were astounded, not knowing the cause.

[246] When the hermit learned about his, he covertly took the bag and fled, while they were still stunned. When [the folk] returned to their senses and realized what had happened, they raised a loud cry and ran to the lord of that village and told him about the miracle which had occurred. A clamor arose in the village and everyone came to see the child. [Lord] Dlen arose with his servants and *shinakans* and pursued the monk to the banks of the Aghun River. As soon as [the hermit] realized that they were pursuing him, he removed the tiny [g234] fragment of wood from its container and put it in the folds of his garment. Then he threw the reliquary onto a plum bush in the midst of a dense forest. He himself departed. Those men [following him] arrived at that spot and suddenly noticed, in the midst of the snow and ice, a shrub covered with green foliage and beautiful flowers which exuded a fragrance unlike any other. Struck with wonder, they realized that the cross was to be found there.

No sooner had they seen and noted the spot than they found in the bush the empty gold reliquary. They pursued [the hermit] and caught up with him by the bank of the Aghun River. The monk turned and saw them. Furiously, he removed from his cowl the wood [fragment] and threw it into the river. The men seized and severely tormented him, saying: "Give the wood to us." They opened the bag and found nothing in it. They stripped off his great hairshirt, examined it, and found nothing there. Then they gazed at the river and saw that its waters had separated into two streams and that in their midst was the relic, in a dry area with a blazing flame above it and exuding a wondrous fragrance like thick smoke. The men were filled with awe and

joy, shaking and trembling with delight, having found this priceless and incomparable pearl. Entering the water, they took that life-giving wood. Putting it into the reliquary they took it to their home [g235]. The hermit followed after them, lamenting and beating his breast. When he finally gave up in despair, he wickedly cursed the House of Dlen. Then he up and departed.

From that day onward, [the relic] remained as patrimony of that clan, revered and glorified with offerings by princes and by the land generally. Subsequently, the pious and God-loving great Prince of Princes Jalal built a church named Gisheradzor, fashioned a reliquary of silver, and placed [the relic] inside it. Through providence from On High this divine and miraculous relic was brought to our principality by its harassed lords, due to the ruin of their district and the bitter destitution of poverty. They came and dwelled by us. Because of their bitter wants, due to debts owed to the foreigners who wanted to enslave them, and due to their terrible worries caused by poverty, the grandchildren of the senior Dleneants' [family] sold the cross to us. The senior [grandson] was named Hasan and two other brothers [sold it]. They received from us the full [asking] price with no reduction, namely, 500 *dahekans*, which is 5,000 *drams*, as well as many gifts of horses, oxen, and clothing.

[247] Beyond this, we returned to those lords the relic's container, estimated at a value of 1,000 *drams*, not in money, but as a gift. We also wrote a document with inviolable provisions, in the presence of many witnesses, describing the price and the expenses [paid]. Then, once again [g236], we had fashioned a reliquary of gold and silver, and also a cross of the very finest quality gold, with a golden base shaped like an apple with [the apple's] base seated on a square having wings connected together. Above this were placed gems of great price: five rubies with four beautiful pearls of the greatest value in their center. We put the Wood of Salvation inside below a precious gem and surrounded by an inscription in tiny letters. On the side [of the reliquary] we put this inscription: "May this blessed symbol, which bore God, and was adorned by Lord Step'annos, bishop of Siwnik', remain forever in the holy church of Noravank'." Furthermore, I had a large rectangular container fashioned of gold and silver, with two opening doors, and made this the property of the blessed church of Noravank'. We wrote our memorial inscription on it as follows:

"In this year of the destruction of our land of the Armenians, in a bitter and calamitous period, in the year 743 [A.D. 1294], during the 15th jubilee, during the reign of the world-ruling Geikhatu-Khan, during the *kat'oghikosate* of the Armenians of Lord Grigor [Grigor II Anavarzets'i, 1293-1307], during the reign of the Georgians of Dawit', during the principate of this state of Elikum and his brothers of the most blessed family [of Orbelean], I, the guilty and sinful [g237] Lord Step'annos, bishop of Siwnik', son of the glorious Prince Tarsayich, leader of the sublime and lofty houses of Tat'ev and Noravank', through providence from On High, happened to be graced with this blessed relic, which had borne God. [The relic] was brought from the district of Artsakh. Having seen it dyed with the blood of Jesus, I burned with an irresistible desire and purchased it from its hereditary owners, from the grandsons of Dlen, for 500 *dahekans* in cash, not including many other gifts. Because of their bitter needs and cruel debts, they gladly sold it to me. We took it and adorned it with pure gold and precious gems, first the cross and then the container, hoping to have this as an intercessor with Christ for my wretched soul, so that, perhaps, I might find mercy before [His] righteous tribunal. Then I gave it as a gift to the holy and sublime congregation of Noravank', where our patrimonial mausoleum is located. Should anyone plot or try to remove it from there, may he be judged together with Cain, Judas, and Arius. May he be cursed by all in heaven and on earth and by all the saints, in life and death. May he be held accountable for our sins.

And now, remember me and my brothers, the valiant and mighty princes Elikum and Liparit, my other brothers and my good sister, Mamk'an, and may you yourself be remembered by Christ our God. Amen" [g238].

[248] In these days there lived a man named Amira, son of Jurj, grandson of the princes of Kapan, from a great family known as Mahevaneants'. [Amira] dwelled in the village of Ar'p'ay with his entire clan. He purchased the Aght'ay vineyard in Ar'p'ay from the great Prince Tarsayich, who had purchased it from its native owners, paying 4,000 *drams* for it. [The owner], having become affiliated with the blessed church at Noravank', [the property] came into our hands. [Amira] had us write a memorial inscription with very great anathemas, so that no one would dare to remove it from the holy convent. For this, we designated that five masses be said for him annually, without fail. In addition, the family of Aght'amareants' and others in ancient times had given to the monastery as a spiritual gift a vineyard at Dayeki k'ar, [a gift] reinforced with an inscription full of anathemas, so that no one would confound it.

We ourselves also purchased for 2,500 *drams* lands in the midst of these [properties] from their native owners, rounding out the vineyard with land extending from Tsakut k'ar to the great crag above the vineyard. We also gave as a spiritual gift a vineyard at Kamrjaxeli and many other properties, lands, and homes. They had also built two mill wheels near the bridge [which were included]. All this is *halal*, inviolable patrimony and inheritance for the holy church at Noravank', which may not be confiscated or ravished [g239]. Whether [donated as] spiritual gifts or purchased by bishops and princes, no one has any right to oppose [the bequests], neither nobles (*awagats'*) nor tax officials (*dzer'naworats'*), neither the prince over this village of Ar'p'ay, neither *azats* nor local *tanute'rs*. No one may oppose these legacies or in any way try to betray or deprive [the Church] either from greed, envy, or any other reason. Should anyone be so bold or insolent as to attempt it, may God the Father curse that person's father, may God the Son curse his son. May the united Holy Trinity curse his body. May all the curses of the prophets, Apostles, and patriarchs be upon his head and upon his House. May his memory be blotted out of this world and [after death] may he be food for the unsleeping worms and fuel for the unquenchable fire. As for those who obey, assist, and preserve [these provisions], may they be blessed by God and by all the saints. Should rule pass to a Tachik and should he think to betray or ravish [these legacies], may he be rejected by God and by his Muhammad. May his *halal* become *haram*. May 10,000 curses be upon him, his line, and his sons, for 1,000 years.

[249] Again, for my weak and miserable self [g240], I have set up this imperishable monument for my soul. Therefore, with the greatest hope I beseech God Who is the hope of all and the Lord of souls, to accept this as though it were a widow's small gift and not to withhold the little crumbs [I ask for] as though from begging dogs. For my memory I received [and gave] the church of Noravank' and took as an intercessor and mediator with Christ, the holy relic which had held God upon it. With my own hands I had fashioned the senior cross [which held the relic]. I gave as a gift [to Noravank' monastery] my legitimate inheritance as well as the village of Ch'ua with all of its borders, lands, and water, vineyards and residents, which I purchased from my brother, Jalal, free from all taxes and litigation from the *divan*, without claims on it from all sides, from the brethren and nobles. I bought this for 21,000 *drams* and also gave the village of Abasashe'n and Surb Sahak which were part of my legacy and legitimate property.

Let no one dare to exercise authority over these villages or to put them under taxation, either [to collect] for the *divan* or [to collect] the *mal* [tax on animals], or any other [obligations]. Only the heads of the holy congregation of Noravank' may exercise authority here. The heirs of this House and the servitors of the blessed Cross shall be the ones who enjoy it and [thus] we shall forever participate in the prayers and masses in this holy church [g241].

In addition, because the extreme heat of the place in summertime made it impossible for bishops and servitors to reside there, we designated [as a summer residence] Arate's monastery, located above Eghegis. In all security we gave to the blessed Church for its enjoyment the monastery and the village with all its surrounding borders and spiritual and hereditary legacies. They should provide for the prosperity of the village and the lighting of the church with as much care as the current House does. Again, I give K'arkop' with all its borders for the enjoyment as inheritance for the leaders of the House and the other brethren.

From now to eternity let this be the firm patrimony of the blessed church of Noravank'. Although heirs, they should be zealous about the upkeep of the monastery and the lighting of the church. Indeed, they should devote all efforts to it, as though it was their own House. Let no one dare to oppose this [bequest] or for any reason whatever think to confound it and pull apart the spiritual gift I have presented to the blessed church at Noravank'. For the village of Ch'ua I purchased, while Arate's and K'arkop' are [donations] from my own legitimate inheritance, and no senior nor ruler, nor anyone else has any claims on them. Should anyone be so bold [as to challenge the bequest] may he be cursed by the Holy Trinity [g242] in life and death. May there be upon him all curses from the [curse put on the] snake to the [curse put on the] antichrist, [curses] which have been put on all evildoers. May he share [the fate of] Judas and perish like the apostate Vasak, devoured by worms. May he be responsible for all our sins and shortcomings, and be subject to the eternal flames. But as for those who accept and obey [the provisions of the bequest], may they be blessed by God and all His saints.

**[250]** Now should rule pass to a Tachik and should he try to ravish it, may he be abandoned by God and by his prophet and may he and his House and descendants be ruined in the pit of perdition. May 100,000 curses be upon him.

While I was drawing up this memorial and establishing these spiritual donations, the heirs of this blessed House of spiritual brethren, with unanimous affection, established in my remembrance in this holy church forty masses for the period of the fifty days from the first Sunday after Easter to Pentecost, every morning to recite the prayer *Ambits'k'* [The Pure], and to offer requiem services over my grave. [Furthermore], on the feast-day of the blessed Pentecost in my memory let them offer a requiem by sacrificing oxen and sheep and widely distributing food and drink to the poor and needy. On that day, when all the churches are offering requiems, let them [g243] also beseech God through these spiritual offerings for the forgiveness of our sins and for the crumbs of mercy. Perhaps I will be protected against the awful shame before the terrible tribunal, where words cease and only deeds reign.

Should someone from among the local leaders or bishops or one of the sextons or heirs of the House lazily neglect to fulfill our memorial, either through envy or for any other reason as long as these churches survive and thrive, may they share Judas' fate and be ranked with the priests who killed God. May they be rejected by the Holy Trinity and be responsible for our sins, which are as limitless as the ocean. May those who implement [the provisions] be blessed and ranked with all the saints and be rewarded. Amen.

And now, O brothers, I recall something that occurred slightly before I wrote these lines, [an event] which cut me to the quick and struck me with inconsolable grief, [the death of] my beloved younger brother, P'axradula. He was in the flower and bloom of youth, with the down of a beard just starting to grace his fine chin. His heart was full of happy thoughts and enjoyment of the sweet pleasures of life [g244], running and leaping with princely glory. He died suddenly. Before its time this wondrous flower was cut and the roots were pulled out. And our joy has vanished. Separating from us, he passed to another world without [leaving] any memorial. They took and buried him along with his father. May my Lord Jesus compensate for this deprivation here and forgive him there, overlooking the sinful passions of the body and delighting him with the enjoyment of eternal happiness. Amen.

And now, O readers, I think it proper to place at the end of my book first the names and ranks of the bishops of Siwnik'. Then, like a gold necklace put on the neck or a royal seal placed on a precious treasure, to put as the final chapter the names of the blessed and fortunate patriarchs of the Armenians. Since [our book] began with God, we need to end it with those holy men who were clothed in divinity [g245].

***Bishops of Siwnik'. Their years and numbers. The first bishop was ordained by Saint Gregory.***

1. Lord Grigoris, years 46.
2. Lord Mashtots', years 46.
3. Lord Anania, years 43.
4. Lord Nun, years 8.
5. Lord Gaghat, years 17.
  
6. Lord Mushe', years 36.
7. Lord Erits'ak, years 1.
8. Lord Makar, years 28.
9. Lord Petros, years 10.
10. Lord Gigan, years 3.
  
11. Lord Vrdane's, years 23.
12. Lord Grigor, years 15.
13. Lord K'ristap'or, years 10.
14. Lord Dawit', years 27.
15. Lord Mat'usaghay, years 18.

Interregnum, years 8.

16. Lord Abraham, years 30.
17. Lord Yovse'p', years 19.
18. Lord Yovhan, years 22.
19. Lord Movse's, years 7 [g246].
20. Lord Anania, years 7.
  
21. Lord Yovhan, years 9.
22. Lord Step'annos, years 1.
23. Lord Yovse'p', years 17.
24. Lord Yovakim, years 17.
25. Lord Sadovk, years 32.
  
26. Lord Yovhanne's, years 2.
27. Lord Sagho'mo'n, years 7.
28. Lord Eghia, years 8.
29. Lord T'e'odoros, years 18.
30. Lord Ge'org, years 8.

31. Lord Dawit', years 17.
32. Lord Yovhanne's, years 10.
33. Lord Sagho'mo'n, years 17.

34. Lord Yovhanne's, years 33.
35. Lord Yakob, years 41.
36. Lord Vahan, years 6.
37. Lord Ashot, years 17.
38. Lord Yovhanne's, years 6 1/2.
39. Lord Ashot, beginning in the same year for 5 1/2 years.
40. Lord Samue'l, years 3.
41. Lord Yakob, years 3.
42. Lord Grigor, years 3.
43. Lord Yovhanne's, years 50.
44. Lord Grigor, years 58 [g247].
45. Lord Step'annos, years 27.
46. Lord Barsegh, years 5.
47. Lord Grigor, years 20.
48. Lord Step'annos, years 46.
49. Lord Yovhanne's, years 38.
50. Lord Hayrapet, and
51. Lord Sagho'mo'n, 20 years, 40 years together.
52. Lord Yovhanne's, years 3.

[253]

#### **Occupants of the see at Noravank', from the same line**

1. First, Lord Yovhanne's Kapanets'i.
2. Lord Step'annos, son of Lord Grigor.
3. Lord Sargis, years 20.
4. Lord Step'annos, years 20.
5. Lord Grigor, 1 year.
6. Lord Sargis, years 24.

53. Then the two sees were united under the administration of Lord Step'annos [Orbelean], who was bishop of Siwnik', sitting at Noravank'.

#### **These are the names of the monasteries and retreats from all themes of this blessed diocese**

The monastery of Meghri, named for the blessed Yovhanne's [g248].

The retreat for men called the Great (*Mets*) retreat.

Harants' retreat for men.

Mother of God retreat at Shnhe'r for virgins.

Halidzor retreat for virgins.

Amenap'rkich' retreat at Manlewi for virgins.

Gandzap'arax monastery.

The blessed congregation at Karchewand.

The blessed monasteries of Yovhann and Tsitser'nak.

#### **The *kat'oghikoi* of the Armenians, their years and numbers**

1. Saint Grigor Lusavorich', 30.
2. Aristake's, 7.
3. Vrdane's, 15.
4. Yusik, 6.
5. P'ar'nerse'h, 4.
  
6. Saint Nerse's, 20.
7. Shahak, 4.
8. Zawe'n, Shahak's brother, 1.
9. Aspurake's, their brother, 3.
10. Saint Sahak, 51.
  
11. Yovse'p', 12.
12. Giwt, 10.
13. Yovhan Mandakuni, 6.
14. Babge'n, 5 [g249].
15. Samue'l, 10.
  
16. Mushe', 8.
17. Sahak (II), 5.
18. K'ristap'or (II), 6.
19. Ghewond, 3.
20. Nerse's (II), 9.
  
21. Yovhanne's (II), 17.
22. Movse's, 44.

#### **[254]**

From Saint Gregory until the fourth year of Movse's, who established the Armenian Era [of dating], 249 years had elapsed. In the ninth year, the 500th year occurred. From Christ, 553 years had elapsed.

23. Abraham (I), years 23.
24. Yovhan (III), years 16.
25. Komitas, 8.
26. K'ristap'or (III), 3.
27. Ezr, 11.
28. Nerse's (III), 21.
29. Anastas, 6.
30. Israye'l, 10.
  
31. Sahak (III), 26.
32. Eghia, 14.
33. Yovhan (IV) O'dznet'si, 11 [g250].
34. Dawit' (I), 12.
35. Trdat (I), 23.
  
36. Trdat (II), 3.
37. Sion, 8.
38. Esayi, 13.

39. Step'annos (I), 2.  
40. Yovab, 6 months.  
  
41. Sagho'mo'n, 1.  
42. Ge'org (I), 3.  
43. Yovse'p' (II), 11.  
44. Dawit' (II), 27.  
45. Yovhanne's (IV) from Kotayk', 22.

46. Zak'aria (I) from Dzag, 21.  
47. Ge'org (III), from Gar'ni, 21.  
48. Mashtots' from Sevan, 7.  
49. Yovhanne's (VI), the historian, 27.  
50. Step'annos (II), 1.

51. T'e'odoros (I), 10.  
52. Eghise' (I), 7.  
53. Anania, 22.  
54. Vahan, 2.  
55. Step'annos (III), 2.

No *kat'oghikos*, 1.

56. Xach'ik (I), 19.  
57. Sargis (I), 27 [g251].  
58. Petros (I), 40.  
59. Xach'ik (II), 6.  
60. Grigor (II), 40.

61. Barsegh (I), 24.  
62. Grigoris (III), 53.  
63. Nerse's IIV), 7.  
64. Grigor (IV), 20.  
65. Grigoris (V), brother's son of the above, 1.

[Grigoris], who had been imprisoned in Kop'itar' fortress, [tried to escape] at night, fell from the wall he had suspended himself from, and died.

66. Grigoris (VI) Apirat, 7.  
67. Yovhanne's (VII) Metsabar, 18.  
68. Kostandin (I), 47.  
69. Yakob (I), 19.  
70. The other Kostandin (II), who reigned for three years and was exiled.

71. Step'annos (IV) Hr'omklayets'i, who reigned for two years. Then he was taken into captivity in Egypt, where he died in fetters in prison a year later. Now [the *kat'oghikos* in Cilicia] is Lord Grigor (VII), bishop of Anawarza [g252].

*Step'annos' colophon to his book.*

God is the beginning and ending of everything. What begins with Him, and is advanced by Him, also ends with the Lord. This is not unlike a circle drawn with a compass: it has a starting point, embraces within its outline diverse areas, and returns to join at the same point it began from. Grace also may be viewed in the same way: it gushes forth from an abundant source, passes through everyone, giving to each an appropriate share, provides goodness and support to everyone and then, with the same simplicity, rejoins the place it originated from. So it was with me: endowed with grace from On High, yet possessing a lower nature; endowed with a form from Heaven, but having a base essence; having the appearance of one who gives life, but the spirit of a murderer; having the name of chief priest, but really being the chief of the slanderers. Yet, having received divine favors, I wanted to accomplish some useful work: beginning with God, advancing with Him, and then concluding with Him.

Thanks and glory to all beings fashioned by the Creator [Who is] ineffable, incomprehensible, generous in distributing gifts, and merciful to all. Blessings, honor, and adoration [g253] from the fiery beings of Heaven to the material living terrestrial creatures like us, from all kinds of creations in their vast multitudes. Blessings, honor, and adoration to Him Who gave my raw and undeveloped intellect and my weak and sick soul—which was drowning in the sea—the power to see the conclusion of my work, to reach the end of what I had started. These are bitter days, a time of famine and death, when death seems desirable and is longed for. Life has become hateful and wretched—there is unending pain for everyone in the morning, and delirium in the evening, [these are] days from which there are no expectations of anything good. Rather, there is only unbelievable grief and trouble every day. Yet, by the will of Almighty God the Father, through the grace of the mercy of His only-begotten Son, Jesus, and by the providential mercy of the liberating Holy Spirit, I, the lowly and sinful servant of Christ, Step'annos, through His mercy bishop of Siwnik's 12 districts, and also through His forgiving will, seated on the throne of the metropolitanate of this House, saw the names and memories of our predecessors reduced and rejected, and saw the legacies of the churches ravished and lost. For a long time I yearned to restore them and to tell about them. With great effort and much labor [g254] I sought and assembled [information] from the old and new histories of the Armenians, also from inscriptions on churches, and from the oldest documents collected and kept in secure repositories in the monastery of Tat'ev. In addition, [I made use of] accurate traditions attested by reliable folk about events and places, verifying their accuracy and leaving aside nonsensical material, so that the audience would not be wearied by it. We wrote concisely what was most useful and appropriate. We wrote this pleasant history, which might be called a book of memories, presenting accounts of our predecessors. It is not a general history, but relates specifically to the land of Sisakan.

[256] We leave this as an imperishable monument and a praiseworthy memorial for future times, for the strengthening of our blessed and celestial see of Siwnik', and for the splendor of the churches under its supervision. Lifting it up in our sinful arms, we took and offered it as a gift in the House of the Lord, as a mystical gift, as a fee paid to the Apostolic cathedral church of Tat'ev, and to all of this principality's temples where God resides. On my knees I beseech and piteously beg [g255], O sublime and radiant Heavenly Bridegroom, that [You] look upon [this book] with all the saints of which You are the magnificent head, and accept this fruit of my labor, this child of my soul, into Your divine treasury. [Accept it], if not among the most honored [of gifts], at least among [the gifts that] the poorest [folk] offer to the altar, as [goats'] hair [Exodus 35. 23-26], or as a cup of cold water, or [an offering of] two small coins. By welcoming this [book] into His Church, [Christ] gives us cause to expect good things and generous gifts—if not the most perfect [gifts] then at least the scraps which dogs eat. For I did not foolishly and idly seek to hide the talent which You gave me. Rather, I used it according to my limited abilities. And I placed [this book in the church] as though placing a coin on the collection table, so that I would not hear people say about me: "He was an evil

and wicked servant." Rather, [I wrote this book] so that, on that great day which has no night, when words cease and deeds reign supreme, I might be judged worthy of the blessed invitation: "Come and enter into the joy of the Lord." To Him praise and glory from all beings, now and for time without end. Amen.

[257] Now after the material [collected] was refined, this work was composed during the world domination of the great king and autocrat Ghazan-Khan, son of Arghun, under the universal rule of the Nation of Archers, during the reign as king of the Georgians of Dawit', son of Demetre', and [the reign] of the Armenians of Het'um [g256], son of King Lewon, during the rule of this principality of the blessed and pious Elikum, son of Tarsayich, and his brothers. [This was done] during the tenure of the God-honored and spiritual Lord Grigor, the independent patriarch, and [during the tenure] of Lord Step'annos, *kat'oghikos* of the Aghuans, in the year 1299 of the timeless Word, in our Armenian [calendar] in the 14th jubilee and 46th year, in the second year of the 186th Olympiad, the 50th indiction, lacking a year. [Written] in the sublime and glorious monastery of Noravank', under the protection of the temples where God resides and [under the protection of] relics which have borne God, during days of exile and bitterness, while we are living in the midst of dreadful turmoil and constant despair, with our eyes looking only to a visit from On High.

And so, with my face bowed to the ground, I beseech you, blessed orders of clergy, to find me worthy of remembrance. Do not ignore me when I am not here, when I have turned to earth in an empty tomb. Rather, see me as though I am before your very eyes, beseeching and imploring you like a beggar with a red face full of suffering, who seeks the crumbs of charity from you, that is to say, [I ask] that just once you make me worthy of divine sacrifice. Should you [g257] find errors or shortcomings in this [book], either too much or too little [narration], do not reproach me with a malicious mind, for it is human nature to stumble and to fall in words and in deeds. Rather, correct and, with divine love, forgive us our trespasses. For this one act [of remembrance] may all of you find ten thousandfold of mercy from merciful God, through a second life. I enjoin all who encounter my work: do not dare to subtract one word from it or alter the order of the composition or, shamelessly, tear out a page either through envy, or treachery, or for any other reason. If someone has such insolent audacity [as to alter this book], may that person be expunged from the Book of Life, be cut off from the eternal testament, and be rewarded along with Judas and the crucifiers, and condemned with Satan and all evildoers. But those who copy [this manuscript] and put this brief colophon with it, may they, along with us, find mercy from the creative love of God, when alive and also when in the grave, and on that day which has no night. Glory to Him from all creatures and praise to Him from all the heavenly legions, through all time and for all eternity. Amen [g258].

[258]

---

## 74.

### *Taxes paid to the Church by the twelve districts of Siwnik', according to the old statute.*

#### 1. Tsghuk district

Norik', 12; Tat'ev, 10  
Ts'ur, 6; Tsats'ard, 10  
Xovit, 8; Tashu, 5  
Harzhik', 10; Arit, 6  
Berdkanerech'i, 6; Artsiw, 6

Xotuk', 8; Ltse'n, 6  
Axne'n, 8; Orotn, 10

Berdn, 10; Opni, 6  
Erets, 6; Eremk', 6  
E"ghuerts, 10; Mogoyk', 10

Mruts', 8; Lor, 12  
Mardakayk', 6; Mshkadzor, 6  
Tatan, 6; Sapatadzor, 8  
Mazazni, 6; P'ok'r Oyts, 8  
Tolok', 12; Torunik', 10

Torunk'oy, 8; Txunik', 12  
Ak'atsi, 12; T'ortsoghu, 6  
Dastakert, 10; Gruak, 6  
Metsik', 12; Pisak', 6 [g259]

Aghat'marat', 6; Xurek', 6  
Ts'o'ghuni, 10; Moreni, 12  
Areve's, 7; Bnunik', 6  
Art'e'k', 10; At'ghe'k', 12  
Tsnni, 12; O'rdik'ik', 12

Ozihi, 10; E"shtkamayri, 12  
Getakits', 12; Bghean, 6  
Xank', 12; Ordzaber, 12  
Tsaghkay, 12; Korovi, 12  
Meght'i, 12; Kirakosik, 12

Br'nakot', 12; Agarakik, 7  
Kamavank', 10; Gaylots' vank', 10  
Vasakakert, 12; Muts'k', 10  
Shaghat, 12; Shaghatoy vank', 6  
Aparanits' get, 10; Shok'ar, 10

Metsadzor, 10; P'et'akanots', 6  
Vaghatin, 12; Aghitu, 12  
Gomer, 7; Kuravank', 7  
Kak'awarti, 12

---

[259]

## **2. Ewaylax district**

K'aghatak, 12; Shak'e', 12  
Zak'e'i vank', 12; Lerin vank', 12  
Dastakert, 10; Ankeghakot', 10  
K'arunj, 10; Borti, 12 [g260]

Verin Borti, 12; Gghvrt'ot, 6  
Biwroti vank', 6; Iwghotamaghk', 12  
Sarap'arax, 6; Ur'akan get, 10

Got'adzor Nerk'in, 7; Ginakan get, 10  
Got'adzor Verin, 10; Ordan hayr, 10

Akank', 10; Dzkharats, 12  
Metsadzor miws, 12; Dzghahayreank', 10  
Kor'oschap'or, 7; Saghatdzor, 8  
Mazazne', 6; Boghoti jur, 6

---

### **3. Vayots' dzor district**

Getik, 12; Derbn, 10  
Goloshiti vank', 6; Ughi dzor, 10  
Artots' get, 6; Tear'navank', 12  
Martiros, 7; Aparank', 6  
Bardzi she'n, 12; Mayradurk', 12

Ajoghk', 10; Moxrots', 6  
Kapoytk', 12; Ktro'nk', 10  
Dekn, 10; Agheaw, 10  
Aruts', 12; Bor, 10  
Ajar'agawit', 6; P'sho'nk', 15

Gaghatay, 10; Xoghawas, 10  
Korotiwink', 10; Lich, 6  
E'rve'nk', 6; Kamrjoy dzor, 8  
Xordzay, 8; Aghope'n, 8 [g261]

### **[260]**

Zedeay, 8; K'ach'i marg, 6  
Ekean, 10; Ererunk', 10  
Gnshin, 6; Bakert, 10  
E'rgech', 10; Orgoyeregi, 6  
Apanay, 6; Vardenik', 10

Msen, 12; Hats'ik', 7  
Agaraki dzor, 5; Nrbiwn, 12  
Eghegnadzor, 12; Norik', 12  
Berdimayr, 20; Amazaw, 10  
Kurank', 12; Arkadukert, 6

Hork', 12; Oghean, 10  
Xarashko'nk', 10; Artaboyi, 10  
Arawr, 7; P'orakoy, 12  
Angeghi, 12; Grkik', 6  
Eghegik', 12; Sarkoghovk', 20

Mozn, 12; Agarak, 12  
Arkaghn, 12; Erizhu, 6  
P'shatik', 6; Areni, 12

Erern, 10; Atch'ar, 6  
Xotordzi, 12; Ererunk' miws, 10

Angank', 6; Ke'chut', 6;  
Prakk', 12; Jermuk, 12  
Aght'aboyni, 6; Er kaynarti, 6  
Shatagh, 6; Shatagh miws, 6  
Gosteni, 12; Ts'rtoget, 6 [g262]

Hawu, 6; Arate'nk', 6  
Mijagetk', 6; E''r'edi, 8  
Xndzorut, 6; Echeghi, 10  
Drunk', 10; Ur'ik', 8  
Kak'awuts' aghbiwr, 6; Gomk', 6

Unjor'k', 10; Eznanistn, 6  
Aghnchots' berd, 6; Gndevank', 10

---

## [261]

### 4. Geghak'uni district

Kot', 20; Ktkoyk', 12  
Goch'oy dzor, 12; Skert, 10  
Ts'rts'ni, 7; Xndzi t'aghk', 7  
Op'eats' dzor, 6; Norashe'n, 7  
Ewanakats' hun, 7; Ogheni, 12

Gandzagh antar', 7; Goghdzor, 7  
Erizkoyk', 15; Dastakert, 10  
Vasakashe'n, 10; Zar'agarak, 7  
Amasria, 15; Vazhots', 10  
Kambriwn, 15; Hagk', 15

Xokar'inch, 12; Xorotn, 15  
Argichi, 10; T'mok, 15  
Mehogats, 10; Hovuats' agarak, 7  
Dzag, 17; Katsik', 15  
Ut'brun, 12; Yushaperek, 6  
Vardenik', 6; Nerk'in Vardenik', 15 [g263]

T'ambarark', 12; Ereruk', 15  
Ar'nch'oy hun, 15; Gomk', 12  
Pahavank', 6; Kutrakagomk', 10  
Vanavan, 7; P'ar'akank', 10  
Beran, 12; Ghexk', 10

Brti ayrk', 12; Shikakarbn, 15  
Gerap'u, 15; Tsaghkay, 7  
Aghaenk', 15

---

**5. Sot'its' district**

Sot'k', 20; Tsap'at'aghk', 7  
Unch'idzor, 7; Hawsat'aghk', 7  
Awazan, 12; Hamamabakk', 7  
Arawisabak, 6; Gukar'inch', 15  
Tre'tuk', 8; Sap'ch'anapat, 8

Xort'aget, 8; Vardanabakk', 6  
Norabakk', 6; Vasakashe'n, 10  
Kut'n, 12; Anapat, 12  
Arp'unk'n, 12; Shatjre'k', 10  
Kujkunik', 10; Barkoyk', 12

Vaghawer, 10; Ur'akarb, 15  
Amer'nap'or, 15; Shatvan, 10  
Shinik', 15; Astuatsatsin, 10  
Ere'z, 12; Bakap'or, 12  
Mak'enots', 15; Etets'ik 12 [g264]

Zerishat, 12; Aghxoz, 10  
Aghberadzor, 7; Armnal, 17  
Anapat, 7; Shapuhay'ay, 7  
Kutakk', 10; Vach'e'ibakk', 6  
Jaghats'adzor, 10; Ghach'urabak, 7

Bashuk', 12; Ter'natean, 12  
Berdadzor, 8; Drunk', 12  
Ort'nik', 15; Taro'nk', 15  
Taranak, 15; Axor'antun, 15  
Ozmunk', 12; Pashoy, 12

Zahoy, 12; Xorasanabak, 6  
Orogik, 12; Akonk', 10  
Goghots' agarak, 12; Ayrk', 15  
Geghamabak, 10; Kaxan-aghbiwr, 8  
Sahakabakk', 7; Xont'akabak, 7

Jaghats'adzor, 6; Orots', 8  
Dprabak, 6; Tkolabak, 6  
Atrmeghenabak, 12; Xorzhay, 12  
Snadzor, 6; Tsar, 15  
Getabak, 10; Eleri, 8

Varzhanke' aghbiwr, 10; Honche'nk', 7  
Eghjeruenik', 8; Anapat, 10  
Aghdzi get, 6 [g265]

## 6. Aghahe'j district

Awzhe'n, 10; Ane'zh, 12  
Tandzut, 7; Hats'eats' aghbiwr, 12  
K'eghadzor, 10; Hak, 15  
Artaget, 12; Meghi, 12  
Akank', 8; Aruakan, 6

Msheni, 6; K'ashat'aghk', 6  
Verin she'n, 6; Dzasar, 6  
Matrkert, 6; Mnni, 6  
Hunch'ak', 12; Margk', 10  
Poghxoch'ox, 10; Surb Ge'org, 8

Lsork', 8; Agaraku get, 10  
Shabaki, 7; Karkatan, 6  
Paghaxanik', 12; Moshenk', 10  
Orbok'oy k'ar, 8; Arahuts, 6  
Tsitsar'navank', 10; Hayeleak, 6

Katohorink', 12; Maxuln, 10  
Xrur, 8; Tsorats'ik', 10  
Xaghtik', 12; Vzhnaber, 12  
Hayri, 8; Anushawan, 12  
Aghtar', 6; Shamrt'ay, 8  
Ark'oy, 6; Vasakakert, 10  
Awarak, 12 [g266]

---

[264]

## 7. Haband district

Aghaxerd, 12; Xaxalk', 8  
Katavank', 8; Xndzoresk, 10  
Vanats'ay, 20; Mrkak'ar, 12  
Xoreay, 7; Shornoxoy, 12  
Tandzeak, 7; T'art'un, 7

Tegh, 12; K'o'ch'agegh, 12  
Patandavank', 7; Ezni, 7  
Norashinik, 6; Xonatsax, 20  
Vaghatu, 12; Akardan, 10;  
Xorxor', 7; Makaghots', 10

Karbink' Verin, 8; Makaghots' miws, 7  
Karbink' Nerk'in, 8; Deghi, 12  
Go'ru, 20; Ktvay, 6  
Lawakunk', 10; Bazmatsakk', 6  
Shaguay, 10; Artashe'n, 6

Andzkayk', 6; K'rvank', 20  
Genenat'aghk', 6; Gngashe'n, 12  
Ghokani, 8; Boghean, 12  
Ts'atghoni, 12; K'orotan, 15  
Agarak, 8; E"ghuerdz, 12

Andzkayk', 12' Akanay, 10  
Dzagadzor, 12; Petroskay vank', 10  
Naxandzp'or, 8; Aghojrik, 8 [g267]

Gorayk', 10; Uskadzag, 8  
Xot, 12; Storin, 12  
Margadzor, 8; Bahizadzor, 18  
Bak's, 10; Nap'azashe'n, 12  
Ark'oy, 10; T'aghara, 8  
Shat'it'aghk', 8; Shnoy herk', 24  
Hale', 8

---

[265]

## **8. Baghk' district**

Ach'aghu, 8; Achanan, 12  
Barervayr, 6; She'kk's, 12  
Vardavank', 6; Tort'ni, 26  
Tap'ear, 6; Awaragetk', 10  
Tagamar, 20; Xotanen, 12

Eghe'ngn, 6; Norashinik, 6  
Norashinik miws, 6; Hiwneats'dzor, 6  
Obn, 6; Kotevank', 12  
Atr', 10; Aruk's, 6  
Hoghar, 8; Krawaget, 6

Xmoych, 6; Kawart, 8  
Arkanidzor, 10; Togogh, 6  
Zareritastakert, 10; Tatneghishe'n, 10  
Terandat, 8; Agarak, 20  
T'urk', 12; Mocarag, 6  
Anakan, 7; Miws Anakan, 7 [g268]

Bark'on, 6; Bark'on miws, 6  
Geghak'uni, 10; Kmez, 10  
Gukakan, 10; P'ar'awaz, 8  
Metsamarg, 12; Giwgh Kavsakan, 12  
Ardzanadzor, 6

---

## **9. The other Baghk', which is called K'ashunik'**

Ere'ts', 12; Xoghvani, 10  
Dastakert, 6; Tandzavayr, 8  
Vanand, 10; Mach, 7  
Anatats' dzor, 6; Shor'noxoy, 8  
Lermen sh'e'n, 6; Xaxtk', 12

Eweghi, 7; Hawutuk', 6  
Mogk', 6; Martaxani, 10  
Its'an, 6; Goghar, 6  
Awerk', 6; Tachkadzor, 6  
Texk', 8; Kocharu, 7

## [266]

Maghdznatuk', 6; Xoghi, 6  
Jawt'k', 8; Tututuk', 7  
Sntsneak, 6; Akn, 6  
Bakuri vank', 12; Taxn, 12  
Mert'akert, 6; Hnts'nean, 6  
Tsghu, 8; Tatay, 12  
Barkushat, 12; Xirk', 12 [g269]

Treay, 12; Agati, 8  
Chapkut', 12; Korakit', 6  
Andokaberd, 12; Nakorzan, 20  
Arte'n, 10; Naxjawanik, 10  
Art'ik, 10; T'ov, 8

T'ov miws, 7; Aghahord, 10  
Pahu-berd, 7; Azhdak, 12  
At'xoyk', 12; Eruandakert, 6  
Vazhanik', 8; Kr'men, 6

---

## 10. Kavsakan district

Its'an, 12; Bex, 6  
Shtatuk', 6; Oghoyhi, 12  
P'ar'awartoy vank', 6; Bexewerji, 8  
Losukor, 6; Vazhnatuk', 10  
Bost, 10; Mar'akot', 12

Hakavank', 6; Menik, 6  
Tat'u marg, 6; Dalk', 5  
Marur, 8; Varosi vank', 10  
Gon, 5; Hoynots'kor, 5  
Eregik', 7; Daxarean, 10

Hamurk', 6; Var'amaghbiwr, 6  
Machkan, 6; Manushaki marg, 6

Naxkotan, 6; Girkn, 8  
Lim, 8; Ch'amotuk', 8 [g270]

Lim Verin, 8; Limaxovit, 6  
P'shatits'araws, 6; Dits' mayri, 6  
Berk'ni, 8; Ashtarak, 6  
Argap, 6; Kere'n, 12  
Sghat'axk', 12; Shikahoghk', 12

## [267]

Po'ghosi vank', 7; Vaxtangadzor, 7  
T'eghoy kits', 7; Shashige'n, 10  
Ardzaxamayri, 17; Tsanaghu, 20  
Mar'i, 6; Bardzut'aghk', 6  
Luts'mayri, 6; Norashinik, 8

Torvanot, 12; Xozadzor, 7  
Dr'nakert, 7; Tsobi, 12  
Kits', 15

---

### 11. Arewik' district

Aghwoy vank', 7; Kar'ati, 15  
Mayri, 8; Abkavank', 8  
Malunu, 8; Tap'ear, 8  
Meghroy vank', 20; Lohavank', 30  
Ordishoy vank', 20; Luskay vank', 12

Xolavank', 12; Zuarki vank', 12  
Karchawan, 12; Moloshon, 12  
Tashtun, 12; Kuravank', 8  
Agarak, 8; Managhu, 8  
Mel, 6; Tehi, 8 [g271]

Kurek'enk', 10; T'aghamayri, 6  
Xozugiwgh, 6; Vardanadzor, 6

---

### 12. Dzork' district

Baghaberd, 12; Noragiwgh, 12  
Tinik', 12; Bakavank', 12  
Tsaght'anu, 6; Kahuray, 6  
Geghoy vank', 20; Och'et'i, 6  
Bexorot, 8; Sharak'oy, 8

Besh, 6; Kachachut, 8  
Baghaxu, 8; Kits'k', 8  
Ajaraj, 10; Vazhunik', 12

**13. Ernjak district**

Bust, 12; Akulik', 12  
Bekerunik', 12; Amar'ashe'n, 10  
Oghuhi, 12; K'dovnay, 8  
Abrakunik', 12; K'arkop', 12  
Berdik, 12; R'apat, 12

---

**14. Chahuk district**

Chahuk, 20; Aghberaxach', 50  
Xax, 12; Karmir ekeghets'i, 12  
Ordok', 12; Blur, 12  
Pahest, 12; Ghabe'n, 12 [g272]

E"zgho'n, 12; E"njghakert, 12  
Noragiwgh, 10; Guk'i, 12  
Xor'atunik', 12; Tige'n, 12  
Gehenik', 12; Armawashe'n, 10  
Saghuasonk', 8; Dzaghay, 8

Hedzanay, 8; T'amashagh, 12  
Op'ik', 12; Noragiwgh miws, 12  
T'at'erk', 12; Shawe'n, 12  
Norberd, 12; Akor'i, 12  
Ezatunk', 12; Agarak, 8

Dalarink', 8; K'rt'n, 8  
K'oylk', 12; Xor'unik', 6  
Draxtik, 6; Tsawalk', 12  
Aghu, 12; Gaylakal, 10  
Jur, 8; Oleni, 8

Babonk', 12; Taxtakk', 8  
Arku get, 12; Anushawan, 12  
Aghdaw, 6; Norashinik, 6  
Shmrt'ayi, 8; Ark'oyk'ay, 6  
Vasakakert, 10; Aweraki, 12

Glory to Christ, forever. Amen. The above listing of villages dates from 677 of the Armenian Era [A.D. 1228].

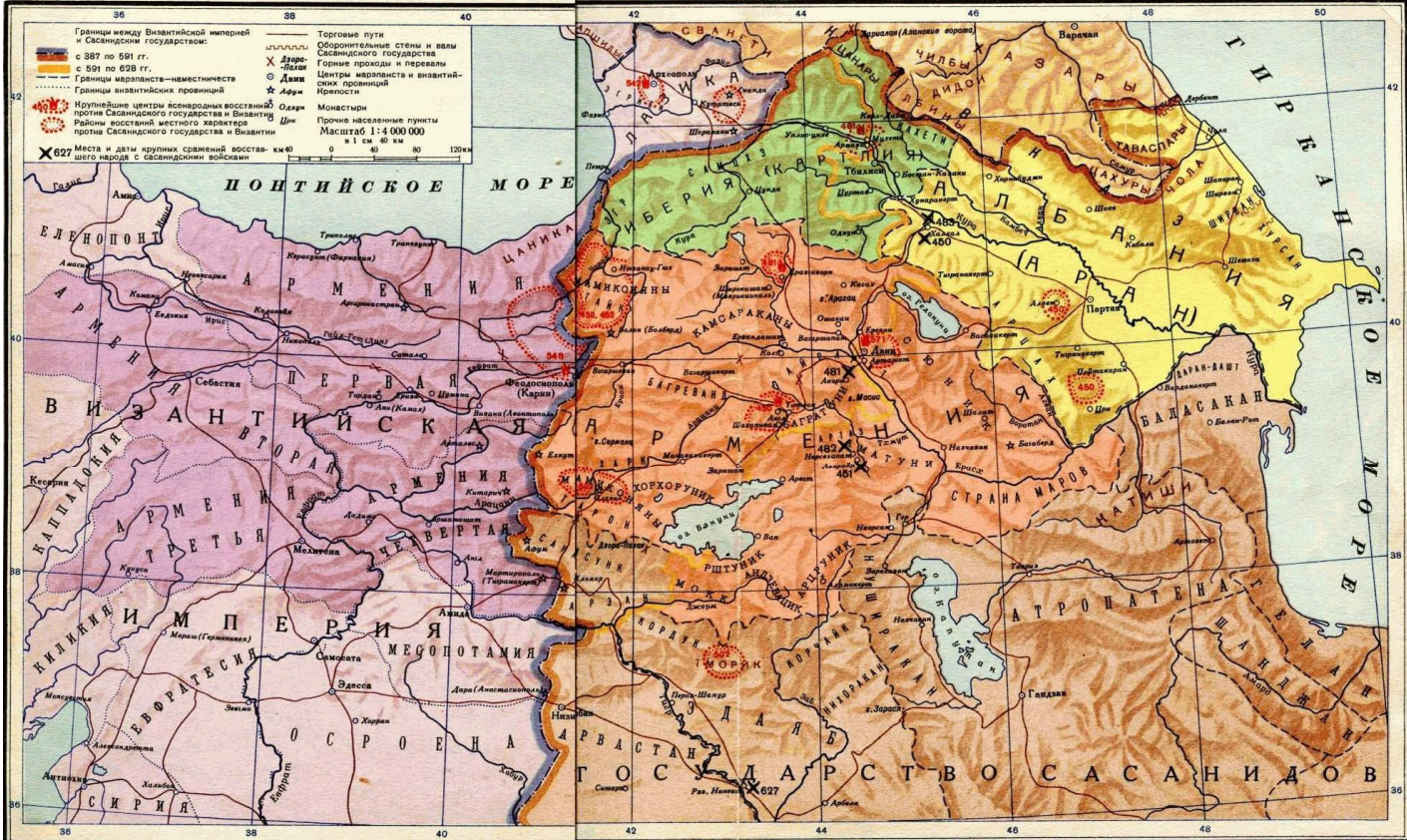




# АРМЕНИЯ в I—IV вв.



# АРМЕНИЯ В V-VII вв.



# АРМЕНИЯ НА РУБЕЖЕ X-XI вв.



Автор карты С.Т.Еремян

# АРМЕНИЯ НА РУБЕЖЕ X-XI ВВ.



# АРМЕНИЯ и СОПРЕДЕЛЬНЫЕ СТРАНЫ на рубеж



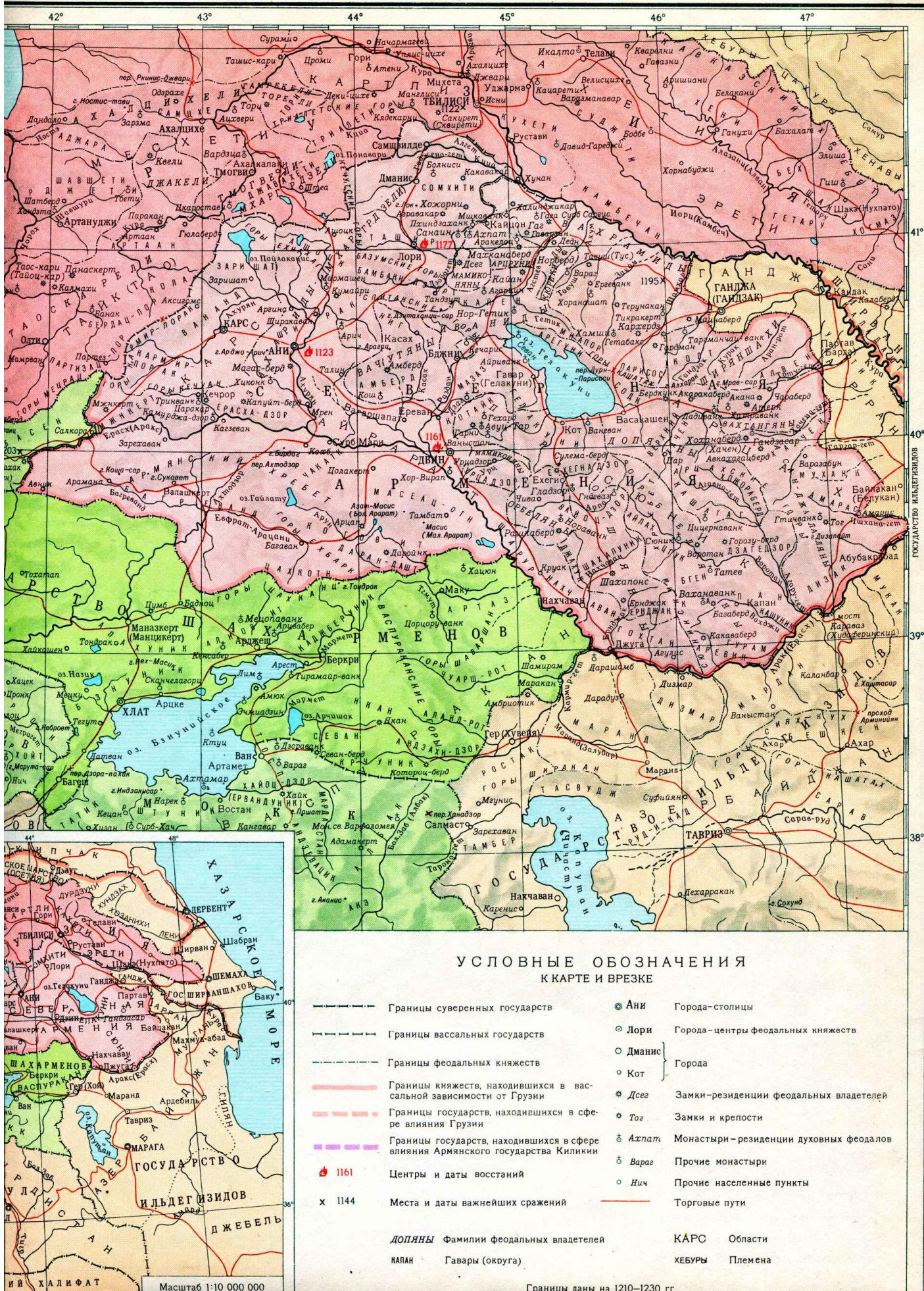
# РЕДЕЛЬНЫЕ СТРАНЫ на рубеже XII-XIII вв.



# АРМЕНИЯ НАКАНУНЕ МОНГОЛЬСКОГО ЗАВОЕВА



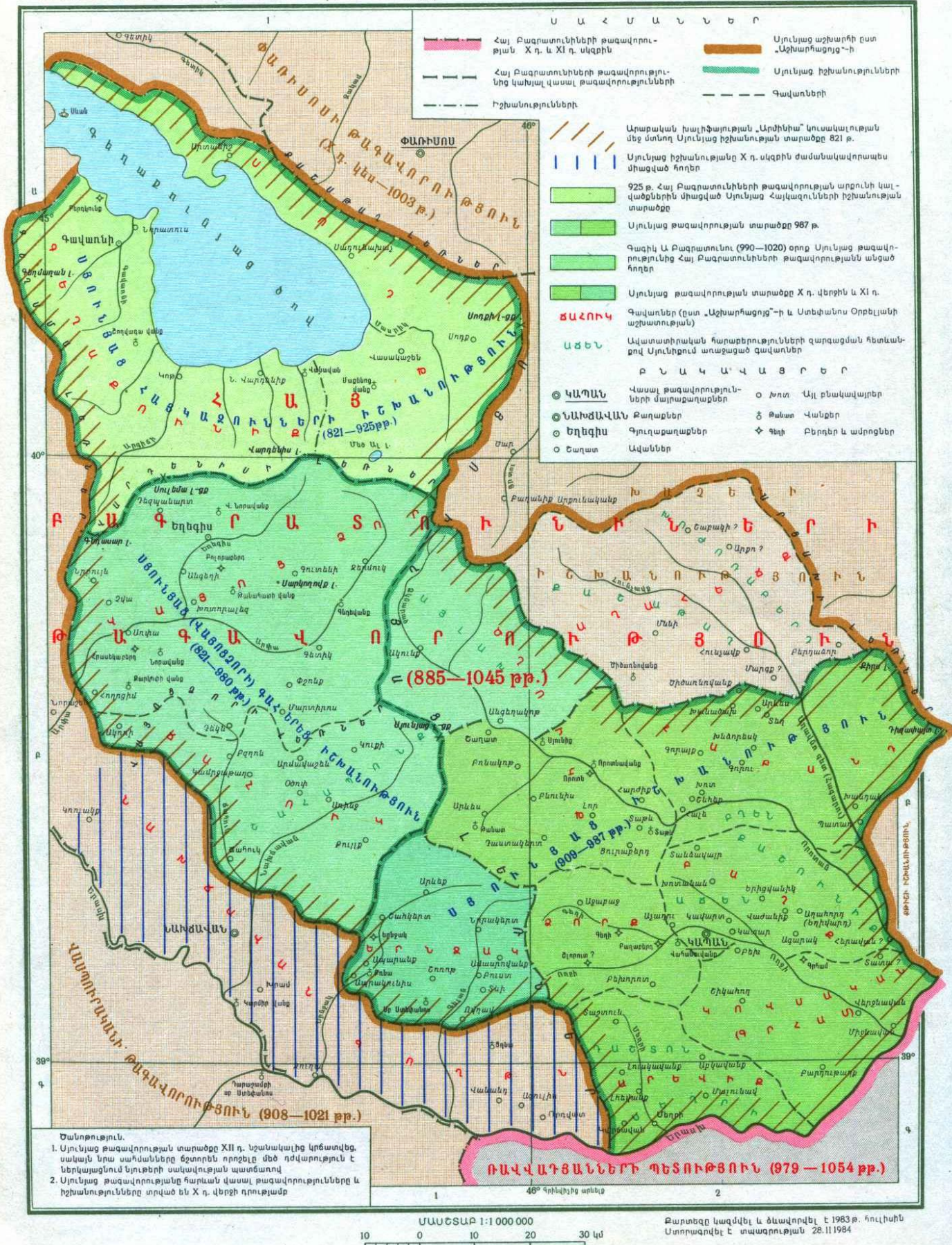
# ВРЕМЕНА НАКАНУНЕ МОНГОЛЬСКОГО ЗАВОЕВАНИЯ



# ՄՅՈՒՆԻՔ (ՄԻՍԱԿԱՆ)



ՍՅՈՒՆՅԱՑ ԻՇԽԱՆՈՒԹՅՈՒՆ (821—987 թթ.) ԵՎ ՍՅՈՒՆՅԱՑ ԹԱԳԱՎՈՐՈՒԹՅՈՒՆ (987—1170 թթ.)



ԶԱԲԱՐՑԱՆ ՀԱՅԱՍՏԱՆԸ XIII դ. սկզբին (ՄՈՆՂՈՍԱԿԱՆ ՆՎԱՃՈՒՄՆԵՐԻ ՆԱՍՏՈՐՑԱԿՆԸ)

